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AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE BASIS
OF
TRUE CHRISTIAN UNITY.

BY THE
REV. S. KETTLEWELL, M.A.,
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"THOMAS à KEMPIS AND THE BROTHERS OF COMMON LIFE,"
"THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE CHURCH,"
ETC., ETC.

VOLUME II.

WELLS GARDNER & CO.,
2, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, LONDON, E.C.

1889.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THE RETURN TO THE ANCIENT BASIS OF UNITY WAS
FRUSTRATED IN MANY PLACES AT THE REFORMATION.

The Reformers on the Continent driven to take other measures than they designed.—The translation and printing of the Bible showed the people the corruptions of the Papacy, and brought about the Reformation.—The first design of the Reformers abroad was to restore the Church on the same lines as those in England.—Evidence of this in the Confession of Augsburg, A.D. 1530.—How the Reformation in England was affected by this Confession.—Several particulars in this Confession show the strong desire of the Foreign Reformers to return to the ancient basis of unity as held in the Primitive Church.—The Government of the Church by Bishops would have been preferred.—How the Lutherans and Calvinists came to adopt other measures.—How the various devices of the Papacy drove them to this.—Hooker on the Genevan Reformation.—Calvin's contentions with Congregationalists.—By what means the Papacy strove to overthrow the Reformation.—The efforts of the Jesuits to cause division, and rally the adherents of the Papacy against the Reformation.—Disaffection and rebellion propagated.—No peace for rulers who favoured the Reformation.—Merciless attempts to crush it in France and Spain.—The numbers tortured by the Inquisition in Spain and in the Netherlands.—The revolt of the Netherlands.—The desperate condition of the Huguenots in France.—The Gallican

Church strongly opposed to the Papacy.—The outcome of the Reformation abroad otherwise than desired. ... 3

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT STILL HINDERS A RETURN TO UNITY.

Several forces prevent it.—(1) The Papacy still resists it.—Will only have that kind which includes implicit submission to her rule.—(2) Different motives which still hinder the Nonconformists.—The principles of the Reformation need to be better understood.—The early Reformers abroad desired the unity of Christians on the ancient basis.—Particular instances of this in the Confession of Augsburg, and those of other places.—Their strong desire to continue in the unity of the Church, and avoid divisions.—Their endeavour to obtain a Reformed Episcopate from England.—Striking evidence of this in the letter written by Calvin and other Reformers to the Church of England.—The King to be at the head of all the Reformed Churches.—How this scheme was frustrated by the Papists.—The deception practiced upon them.—Compelled to form separate communities.—The testimonies of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, and Knox.—The Presbyterianism of Scotland not from Knox, but from the Melvilles.—(3) Another hindrance is men trusting to their own private judgment, without having respect to the authority as anciently established in the Church.—(4) The desire of others to be rulers, or to be accounted as great men in some way.—(5) Ignorance of Scripture, in not reading it aright, on disputed matters, in the sense in which it was written.—(6) Wrong impressions regarding the Church, and the design of Christ.—See the erroneous statements of Mosheim.—Gieseler.—Dean Waddington.—Teachers of men should look thoroughly into these points.—The Laity in all communities no mean judges 42

CHAPTER XV.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST.

Two points generally acknowledged, viz. :—that Christ designed to build the Church ; and, that there was to be unity in it.—The modern view that Christ formulated no plan for it, and gave no instructions about the future government of it, untenable.—Two arguments opposed to this view : (1) The *a priori* argument—or what we might naturally expect Christ to do.—That He could not look for order and unity in the Church, without giving indications of its structure.—Christ would not act as a foolish or thoughtless man about a matter of such importance.—No sensible man would leave the building of his house to chance, without having a plan, nor can we imagine Christ doing this.—Circumstances led him to disclose His purpose gradually and cautiously at the first.—(2) The argument from the words and actions of Christ and His Apostles.—Enough to show that there *was a design*, and *what it was*.—Christ speaks of His Church most frequently under the figure of a *kingdom*.—What this implies.—How Christ illustrates the nature, growth, and character of His Church in various parables.—He declares the principles or laws which His people are to follow.—Unity, humility, love, obedience ; service, self-denial, and forgiveness, their characteristics.—These preparatory instructions and injunctions look forward to, and predicate the accomplishment of His Design and Will.—We may look for more definite instructions, and His ordaining certain means for effecting this. 88

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST (CONTINUED).

A great interest in searching out His Design, respecting the Founding of His Church.—(1) The history of

Christ's ministry foreshadows His Design.—The regular sequence of events shows that He had an eye to the building of His Church.—Christ at first stood alone in His Ministry.—When He first began to preach in the towns of Galilee.—Then His selecting at first four Disciples to be with Him.—His first missionary tour.—At the close of it, He adds another to the four—St. Matthew.—And gradually makes the number up to Twelve.—In the second year of His Ministry, He ordains them to His Ministry, and then calls them Apostles.—They accompany Christ on His next missionary tour, listen to His public teaching, and receive from Him private instructions respecting the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.—Then after a time Christ makes trial of them, and sends them forth alone to preach for Him.—After this Christ appoints another order of ministers—"The Seventy."—Several evidences that "The Twelve," are a higher order.—Hence clearly Christ did not design His ministers to be all equal.—Christ's Ministry typified in the Jewish ministry.—A Threefold order noticed : Christ the Head : "The Twelve," form a second order : and "The Seventy," a third.—On Christ's departure, "the Apostles" advanced, and consecrated to take Christ's place and act for Him.—(2) The more definite instructions of Christ concerning His Church.—Its secure and indestructible character, since it was founded *on* Christ, and *by* Christ.—Authority in it given to St. Peter, and the other Apostles equally.—The opinions of the early Fathers on this.—The power of the Apostles, and their government of the Church to be equally alike, and not one above the others.—"Ye shall sit upon Twelve Thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel."—Christ enjoins the rule for making a constitution for the Church, and settling the permanent order of its government.—How the Apostles, and those who succeed them, are to bear themselves towards the members of Christ's Kingdom. ... 115

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST (CONCLUDED.)

Directions given by Christ as to the government of His Church.—What is to be done in the case of offences.—The chief authority in every place to be appealed to if needful.—The necessary exercise of discipline by those who rule.—How those who rule are to agree together, in what is needful to be enjoined in the Church.—The Apostles are charged to see to the due administration of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.—Also to the proper administration of Baptism as the initiatory Sacrament.—The reasonableness of these Sacraments being under the sole direction of those who bear rule.—The ordinance of preaching, or the ministry of reconciliation committed to them.—Some whose duty it is to see that it is rightly discharged in every place.—Christ's final act of consecrating the Apostles to be Founders of the Church, and to be governors of it in His place.—The words of consecration ; the manner or action of it ; and the power or authority solemnly given to the Apostles by Christ.—The promise of Christ to be with them to the end of the world.—The Divine principle of succession in the ministry of Christ's Church.—All who minister must be lawfully sent forth by those who have the authority to do this.—Christ very strong on this point ; seeing that He was *sent* by the Father ; and the Apostles by Him.—And how can men rightly preach, as St. Paul asks, except they be sent ?—The story of Dr. Woolf, the Jewish missionary, *being sent* questioned by an Eastern Bishop.—All ministers at the present day should see that they are lawfully *sent* according to the Scriptural rule.—Remaining instructions given by Christ to His Apostles respecting some details.—Not to begin their great work until a promised event took place.—That Jerusalem was the place where they were to make a beginning.—And after this, the order of places they

were to take.—All these things shew that nothing of moment was wanting on Christ's part respecting the Founding of His Church. 156

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT JERUSALEM, AS CONSTITUTED BY THE APOSTLES.

Sufficient evidence of the Constitution of the Church given in the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles.—What the Apostles *did* and *said* were evidently in accordance with the instructions of Christ.—It is only when they have finished their work at Jerusalem, that we must expect to see a complete picture or outline of the Church.—One significant act before the Descent of the Holy Ghost, to supply the place of Judas.—Why was this done now, unless Christ had given them directions.—The Holy Ghost came upon all and each of the Apostles equally alike.—Evidences that the chief authority was not vested in any one of them alone, but in the whole Apostolate as a Divine Corporation.—The growth of the Church witnesses to its being a VISIBLE body.—The multitude of Christian converts at Jerusalem necessitate many Congregations, and many ministers.—None of them independent of the rule of the Apostles.—Evidence of the appointment of other ministers *by the Apostles*.—The manner of selecting and ordaining Deacons.—The time when the appointment of a regular ministry probably took place.—The tradition that Christ had ordered His Apostles not to depart from Jerusalem for Twelve years.—The importance of their conferring and acting together all this time in settling the details of a Constitution for the Church.—The Apostolic body have the chief rule, and are occupied in setting in order the principal things.—St. Peter and St. John sent by this body to confirm those baptized by Philip at Samaria.—Inference to be drawn from this.—

St. Peter held responsible for the admission of the Gentiles into the Church; and renders an account of it. How the presence of the Lord with His Church was constantly realized.—He is still regarded as the only One living Head over the whole Church.—Members of the Church first called *Christians* at Antioch.—What this implies, and how it touches upon St. Paul's Apostleship 197

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM COMPLETED.

The harmony and unity manifested in the Infant Church.—Signs of Organization in there being a three-fold Order of Ministers.—(1) Undoubtedly the Apostles formed an Order by themselves.—(2) The Elders or Presbyters formed a Second Order.—Evidences of their existence and taking a leading part in the Church at Jerusalem.—No notice of their being first Ordained.—Several things settled for which there is no direct command.—The change of day for keeping the Christian Sabbath.—Confirmation.—The Baptism of Infants.—A question whether the Deacons or Presbyters were first instituted.—(3) Deacons, the Third Order.—Assuredly a Sacred Order, and not merely laymen.—Stephen and Philip evidently ministers of Christ.—A Nemesis among those who subvert this Sacred Order.—Other Deacons ordained probably before the Seven.—No Independency of Congregations, or of their ministers allowed.—No intrusion into the labours or province of another suffered.—Even the Apostles observe this Rule.—(4) Diocesan Episcopacy begun at Jerusalem.—James, the Just, the first Bishop of the Mother Diocese.—Probably indicated by Christ, appointed and supported by the Apostles.—Evidences of his being at the head of the Church in Jerusalem, and bearing rule.—A pattern for Diocesan Episcopacy in all parts of the Church. 228

CHAPTER XX.

ST. PAUL'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING THE BASIS OF TRUE
CHRISTIAN UNITY.

An Apostle, though not made one by the others, but Divinely appointed and independent of them.—Yet he does not create another body, or sect of Christians.—He regards the Foundation of Christ's Church as already laid.—There is, and can be to him only One Body, and he labours for its extension.—Though independent of the other Apostles, he is at one with them in building and extending the one Church of Christ.—Evidences of this in his Teaching and Ministry.—The Church compared to the natural body, where many members are united in one, though all have not the same office.—And so has God ordained that all should work orderly in the Church, fulfilling their appointed callings, that there be “no schism in the Body” of Christ.—The duty of all true Christians everywhere and always to endeavour to keep this unity.—How urgently St. Paul insists upon Christians striving after this.—He shows that Christ and His Apostles ordained that there should be divers Orders of Ministers in the Church.—The obedience and subjection of all to those who are over them in the Lord, the means of promoting this unity.—St. Paul claims authority from Christ to rule over the Churches in his jurisdiction.—Several instances of his exercising it.—His authority acknowledged in all these Churches.—His rule truly Episcopal.—He ordains the clergy; sets things in order; will have one uniform order in all Churches; and corrects what is wrong with a strong hand.—The Clergy and other members of the Church obedient and subservient to his Injunctions.—His authority employed in supporting that of the duly appointed Pastors, and keeping the Christians in every place as one Body in Christ. 261

CHAPTER XXI.

ST. PAUL ON CHRISTIAN UNITY (CONTINUED.)

More than all the other Apostles he was the expounder and upholder of true Christian Unity.—He like the other Apostles occupied a two-fold position.—(1) Exercising Episcopal authority over the Churches he had planted.—(2) Keeping at one with the other Apostles: working on the same lines with them in planting and governing the Church.—Hence St. Paul's Episcopal supervision of the Churches illustrates that of the other Apostles elsewhere.—If any one, St. Paul might have found an excuse for forming another body independent and separate from that they had founded.—How by divine revelation he had grasped the will and design of Christ with regard to the unity of the Body.—“The Acts of the Apostles” afford evidence that St. Paul held by the constitution of the Church, as laid down by the Apostles at Jerusalem.—He ordained Elders in all the Churches, who act as pastors under him.—He had Deacons also in his ministry.—And a threefold order of ministers as in Jerusalem.—St. Paul asserts that the Gentiles are members of the same body of Christ as the Jews.—St. Peter acknowledges the Divine inspiration of St. Paul's Epistles.—The doctrine and practice of the Apostles the same on all essential points.—The first Synod of the Church at Jerusalem.—Representatives of both the Jewish and Gentile Christians there.—The Apostles of both unanimous in their views.—Critical point: Did St. Paul, in the Churches he planted, eventually introduce Diocesan Episcopacy like the Apostles at Jerusalem?—Ample proof in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.—Sufficient evidence that Episcopacy was not to terminate with the Apostles. ... 291

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FINAL TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE RESPECTING THE BASIS
OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

About thirty years after St. Paul's testimony another is given.—The Seven Letters in the Revelation of St. John.—The Lord Jesus acknowledges the constitution of the Church as settled by the Apostles.—One Body and one kind of government still preserved.—No essential change in the foundation laid by the Apostles.—The Angels of the Seven Churches clearly the Bishops thereof.—The situation of the Seven Churches somewhat analogous to those in the South of England.—The Angels alone bear rule and are severally held responsible.—Instance what is said to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus.—Christ's intimate knowledge of the manner in which the Bishop rules.—The Angel acknowledged to have a lawful pre-eminence and authority over other ministers.—Various particulars in the other Epistles testify the same truths.—How Presbyterians try to get over the difficulty.—Yet they will not allow that their 'Moderators' have the same position or responsibility as these Angels.—Dr. Bowden's criticism.—Episcopacy shewn to be a Divine Institution and upheld by Christ.—Thus two or three testimonies from Scripture at different times establish the truth as to the unity and government of the Church.—And yet divisions prevail.—How we must nevertheless come to an agreement. 344

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN WRITERS TO
THE UNITY OF THE CHRISTIANS.

The value of this testimony as to the meaning and purpose of what is written in the Scriptures.—Also to the Constitution of the Church as founded by the Apostles.—The Apostolical Canons evidence enough that rules

for the peaceable government and unity of the Church were early settled upon.—The earliest Christian writers urge Christians everywhere to keep to the unity and government of the Church as received from the Apostles.—CLEMENT OF ROME.—His Epistle to the Corinthians.—ST. IGNATIUS.—His seven Epistles written on his way to Martyrdom.—Their genuineness proved.—Especially valuable as directly bearing upon Christian life, and the order and unity of the Churches left by the Apostles.—His Epistle to the *Ephesians* corroborates both what St. Paul and St. John said.—A three-fold order of ministers and one everywhere bearing rule.—The Epistles to the *Magnesians*, to the *Trallians*, to *Polycarp*, to the Church at *Smyrna*, and at *Philadelphia*, testify to the same. The Epistle to the *Romans* makes no mention of its Bishop.—The particular object of Ignatius in writing to the members of this Church.—The martyrdom of Ignatius at Rome.—These letters throw light upon the most crucial period of Church History, and should help to settle many of our differences....379

CHAPTER XXIV.

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

Proofs in the second century the most valuable.—More abundant testimony before the time of the Nicene Council.—The evidence of POLYCARP.—His connection with the Apostles.—His letter to the Phillipians.—JUSTIN MARTYR converted, A.D., 133.—His apologies for Christianity.—His Testimony relative to Christian Baptism, the Holy Eucharist, to public worship, and the observance of Sunday.—IRENÆUS Bishop of Lyons.—A disciple of Polycarp.—His reference to the only form of government existing in the Church.—The succession of Bishops continued in every part.—Christians clave to them and to their ministry.—The

testimony of HEGESIPPUS, A.D. 160-180.— His account of Simeon being appointed to rule in the Church of Jerusalem by the remaining Apostles after the martyrdom of James the Just.—A striking proof that the Episcopacy did not terminate with the Apostles.— The testimony from the CATALOGUE OF BISHOPS in each Church from the Apostles.— That of <i>Jerusalem</i> for 200 years.—That of <i>Antioch</i> and of <i>Rome</i> for the same period.—Mention of the catalogues <i>in other Churches</i> .—Many interesting particulars respecting some of these Bishops.—Evidences of the ancient customs that prevailed.—The summing up of the whole of this INQUIRY.	430
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AN INQUIRY
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TRUE CHRISTIAN UNITY.

VOL. II.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THE RETURN TO THE ANCIENT BASIS OF UNITY WAS
FRUSTRATED IN MANY PARTS AT THE REFORMATION.

It has been repeatedly remarked by various writers, that the Reformation on the Continent was carried out on different lines to what it was in the Church of England. But let it not be thought that this was done with any design at the first to be different from the Church of England, but rather that those who took the lead were driven to this by the force of circumstances, and the almost insurmountable difficulties and opposition which stood in the way of the Churches abroad taking a like course to that of the Christians in this country; and the consequence was, that, not so much from their own fault, as from necessity, the current of the Reformation was diverted into other courses different to what the foreign Reformers wished, and to what it would have been if they had been left free as the Church of England fortunately was at that time to adopt the ancient basis of unity for their platform.

It is certain that in all places where the Reformation was taught and published, the people in large numbers separated themselves from the Church of Rome, or refused to conform to or acknowledge the corrupt and unscriptural doctrines and practices which she tried to force upon them. Whole kingdoms revolted from her

to the astonishment of those on both sides. Not only in England was there a very general acceptance of the Reformation as agreed upon in the reign of Edward VIth: but in Germany it is said that nine tenths of the people were in favour of it; in Switzerland most of the large towns were bitterly opposed to the Papacy; and in Geneva, the Bishop and Clergy fled, fearing the wrath of the people who refused to be coerced into what they felt to be wrong; and were indignant that so many worthy Christians among them should be turned from the Church or be refused its sacraments and ministrations unless they would submit to the dictates of the Papacy. Even in Spain the principles of the Reformation had taken a strong hold upon the people. And this was the case in France and the Netherlands to a much larger extent.

There is little doubt but that the former adherence of these people to the Roman Communion was the effect of ignorance. The Bible had been kept from them as much as possible, and they heard but little of the blessed truths of the Gospel of their salvation. The knowledge of a loving Saviour was put in the background, and instead, obedience to the Church as represented by the Papacy, the worship of the blessed Virgin, the adoration of images, the inculcation of several corrupt doctrines and practices, which had no warrant from the Holy Scriptures, were brought prominently forward and insisted upon. But the invention of printing, which had but lately been introduced, caused a wonderful revolution in the minds of the

people. The Bible became circulated, and was eagerly read, and its saving truths handed on and made known from mouth to mouth, though often under protest, as if those who thus sought to diffuse the knowledge of Divine Truth, were taking the Christian religion out of the hands of the Bishops and Clergy, and were seeking to do without their ministry; which was not the case, where the ministrations of the Church were carried on according to God's Holy Word and ordinance, since this would have been wrong; and they who read the Word would have erred in another direction, in not following that Word, since God had directly given to His Church *a ministry* for the preaching of the Gospel, and the building up of His people in their most holy Faith.

But as the entrance of God's Word *giveth light*, yea, *giveth understanding to the simple*, the preaching of the Reformation came with wonderful power and force—it seemed to multitudes as if it were a new revelation of God's Word to them from Heaven: and they intuitively felt that the ministry of the Church under Roman domination had not been faithful to their high calling in Christ Jesus; that the most precious knowledge of redeeming love had been withheld from them sadly too much; they felt, that some how, they were being misled and deceived, contrary to the will and design of Christ; that they were taught to do things that were wrong and foolish, and to believe in things as necessary to salvation, which had no warrant in Holy Scripture, nor were ever required of the early Christians,

or for many generations afterwards. And therefore it was that those who embraced the principles of the Reformation abjured what appeared to be so plainly contrary to, or at variance with the revealed will of God, and had been unlawfully imposed upon them; feeling that in those things wherein the Church differed from the Scriptures she was not to be followed. But still with all this, for the most part, there was a strong desire to maintain their unity with the Church, wherever reformed according to the will of Christ, and as founded and set forth by the Apostles. There was really no general wish *at the first* to break up the Christians of the Reformation into so many factions and divisions as afterwards appeared; there was no set purpose to do differently from what the Church of England did, in returning to the ancient basis of true Christian Unity. Indeed, this seems to be the course that the Reformation abroad *would have taken* if most of the early Reformers could have effected this change in the Church, and not been prevented and thwarted in their efforts.

This is evident from their willingness to have the government of Bishops among them; if they would abide by the Faith and Constitution of the Church as it was in the beginning. Some of the Bishops who became embued with the Reformation which Luther attempted, were upheld and retained in their places where it was possible. These Reformers generally were in no haste to tear themselves from the communion of the Church; and it was only with great reluctance

they did this, when all other efforts failed: nay, in most cases they were driven out. At first some hopes were entertained that the Church of Rome would reform itself: some expectation of this was held out to the Reformers, and the Pope sent his Nuncio to hold conference with many of the leaders. But the hopes were fallacious: there was from the first no real intention in the Church of Rome to adopt any true or permanent reformation. Though the Pope permitted this conference, it was with the expectation of gaining some advantage over the Reformers, or staying their progress; there was never any design to give up his supremacy, or his power of intervention in all Churches, when, and as he liked, regarding the Faith, Constitution, or fundamental Rules or Order in the Church; and here the root of the evil lay. See the account given by Ranke I., 112-124, who says:—"This, if I do not mistake, was a moment of most eventful import, not for Germany only, but for the whole world."

There seems little doubt—looking at the probable course of events—that, had the Church of Rome renounced the Papacy, and been willing to adhere strictly to the ancient Catholic basis of unity, which had been received from the Primitive Church, and had been acknowledged and extended on the same lines, to meet the growing necessities of Christianity by the early Councils of the Church—whereby the purity of the Faith had been maintained, the Apostolic Constitution of the Church preserved, and its government by Bishops honestly upheld—there would in all likelihood have been little or

no such divisions and awfully bloody strifes as took place, and rent the Church asunder. For the more thoroughly the ancient basis of unity is examined, it seems all the more admirably suited to heal divisions, avert and put an end to dissensions, and instead, to secure unity, order, and concord among the great body of Christians; avoiding despotism on the one side, and too much license and disregard to lawful authority on the other.

If we have regard to the first designs of the Foreign Reformers, rather than to the courses which their successors felt driven to, we shall find that they had much in common with the Church of England, or the latter with them, in carrying out the Reformation of their Churches; and that there were very few points in what they purposed to which exception could be taken. For, first, they entreated those in authority to redress various abuses, but they, being bound to uphold the Papacy, utterly refused. Then the Magistrates and temporal rulers were told that it was their duty to reform the Church, by the example of the godly Kings of Judah, which, divers of them did: yet so that the Bishops might have kept their places, if they would only have exercised their sacred office in accordance with the institutions of Christ and His Apostles. In support of this the reader is referred to what appears in the Augustan or Augsburg Confession, which was chiefly drawn up by Luther and Melancthon in the year 1530, and was one of the first and most important public declarations of the Continental Reformers, and whereby we may learn their real sentiments. Our own learned

Bishop Bull speaks of this confession as *the noblest of all which appeared at the Reformation.*

The Reformation in England was indeed greatly affected by this Augsburg Confession, which calls for some notice. In 1538 there was an attempt made to draw up a joint confession of Faith with the German Reformers against the authority of the Pope. Henry VIII. invited some of them over to England; and they met Cranmer and others in London the same year. And they took the Confession of Augsburg as their groundwork for discussion. And in 1551, when King Edward VI. and his Privy Council ordered Cranmer to draw up certain Articles of Faith, he made use of the Augsburg Confession. And later on still, in the Savoy Conference, when the Presbyterians complained of many things they disliked in our Book of Common Prayer, those that undertook the defence of the Church, replied, that "It was the wisdom of our Reformers to draw up such a Liturgy as neither the Romanists nor Protestants could justly except against: and therefore as the first never charged it with any positive errors, but only with the want of something they conceived necessary; so was it never found fault with by those *properly distinguished by the name of Protestants*—that is, those of the Augustine (or Augsburg) Confession." (Collier Eccl. Hist.; Book IX, sec. 886.)

Returning to the early work of the Reformation, some of the learned foreign Divines were invited to settle in England; among whom were Fagius, who was made Hebrew professor at Cambridge; Peter Martyr,

who had the Divinity Chair at Oxford conferred upon him; and Martin Bucer, who had that at Cambridge. And when some exceptions were taken to the First Book of Common Prayers, compiled at the beginning of Edward VIth's reign, the two latter named individuals were consulted in framing the Second Book; which, with some alterations, made at various times afterwards, is, in the main, the same which is now in use. There were certainly some "enrichments," as they might be called, added, as for instance, that portion in the Morning and Evening Prayers before the Lord's Prayer, at the beginning; but at the same time some very primitive and sacred usages were withdrawn, which not a few to this day regret.

These things are noticed to shew how intimately the Reformation in England was connected with the Reformation abroad; and that at the first they moved together much upon the same lines; many of the early foreign Reformers at the beginning purposed to carry out the work abroad in much a similar manner, and on much the same principles as the Church in this country, in which they took a deep interest. It is well to bear this in mind, when we come to mark the differences that afterwards ensued; and to remember that most of the prominent leading Reformers abroad were, upon the whole, anxious, and had a strong desire to return *to the ancient basis of unity as held in the Primitive Church*; but that their aims and efforts were greatly frustrated; and they had to do the best they could, under the circumstances, to keep those earnest-

minded Christians together, who were opposed to the tyranny and corruptions of the Romish Church, and minister to their spiritual necessities.

This becomes the more apparent as we enter somewhat into detail, and recount some of their early proceedings. Thus, in referring to the matter contained in the Confession passed in the Diet of Augsburg, A.D. 1530—to which, bear in mind, the Church of England was in some degree indebted—it may be observed that the first twenty-one articles are concerning the chief points of religion; from which the Romish corruptions and superstitions are excluded, and the purity and simplicity of the Faith, as at the beginning definitely set forth, and the Constitution of the Church as it was before the introduction of the Papacy, upheld. The remainder of the Confession is respecting the ceremonies and usages of the Church. And few who study the Confession will fail to notice how far the Lutherans and Calvinists of the present day have fallen from their original stand-point.

Concerning Baptism, the early foreign Reformers taught in the Confession, that it is necessary to salvation (*necessarius ad salutem*), and that by Baptism the grace of God is conferred. And that children are to be baptised; who, being offered to God in Baptism, are received into His favour. They condemn also the Anabaptists who disallow the baptism of children.

The doctrine of the Eucharist is stated in the 10th Article, which maintains the view of the Real Presence. Concerning the Holy Communion, they teach that the

Body and Blood of Christ are really (*verè*) present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord in faith, love, and penitence: and they disapprove of those who teach otherwise.

Calvin's own confession of faith with reference to the holy Eucharist, which he afterwards drew up in conference with others, and to which the learned Bucer and others subscribed, is as follows:—"We confess that the spiritual life vouchsafed us by Christ in this Sacrament, does not only consist in His quickening us by His Spirit; but over and above this blessing, by virtue of His Spirit, He makes us partakers of that principle of life, His Flesh; by which participation we are nourished to immortal life. Therefore, when we mention the communion of the Faithful with Christ, we understand their communicating with His Body and Blood, no less than with His Spirit; that thus they may be in possession of their whole Saviour. For the Scripture plainly declares that 'His Flesh is meat indeed, and His Blood is drink indeed:' and if we expect a life by Christ, we ought to grow and support ourselves by such nourishment. Thus the Apostle had no common meaning, when he tells us 'We are flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of His bone:' No, by this language he insinuates communion or communication with His Body: a mystery so sublime, that no words are able to reach the dignity of the thing. Neither does our Saviour's Ascension, nor the absence of the local presence of His Body, infer any inconsistency with this privilege. For notwithstanding in this state of mortality, we live

at a distance, and are not in the same place with Him, yet the force of His Spirit is not confined by any corporeal interposition, nor hindered from uniting things, though at the remotest intervals of space: we acknowledge, therefore, His Spirit is the principle of union, and the band as it were of communication with Himself: but then we desire it to be understood in this sense, that this Holy Spirit *does really feed us with the substance of our Lord's Flesh and Blood, and quickens us with the participation of them for glorious purposes of immortality.* And that Christ offers and exhibits this communion of His Flesh and Blood, under the symbols of bread and wine, to those who celebrate the Holy Eucharist pursuant to His Institution. (Calv. Ep. p. 396.)

I have given this passage at length that we may see with what terms of mystery and reverence such men as Calvin and Bucer regarded the Holy Eucharist, and how they expressed themselves for the most part after the manner of the Fathers in the Primitive Church; and as the Church of England has received, and doth expound the same doctrine. It is true that Calvin afterwards—after his intercourse with Zuinglius, who was much his senior, and who would not sign the Augsburg Confession—entertained lower views of this holy Sacrament, and paid less regard to the pattern of the Primitive Church. But this does not alter the fact that at the beginning he was one with the other older Reformers. The cause or reasons of his change may be traced out.

The early Reformers abroad come very near also to approving *the Government of the Church*, as it is in the Church of England, for in the Augsburg Confession they state that—"the Bishops might easily retain the obedience due unto them, if they urged us not to keep those traditions, which we cannot keep with a good conscience." (De Eccl : Potestat :). And again, in the 14th Article, they say—"We have often protested that we do heartily approve the Ecclesiastical policy and degrees in the Church, and so much as lieth in us, *do desire to preserve them. We do not dislike the authority of Bishops*, so they do not compel us to do anything against God's Commandments."

Again in the same Article these words occur:—"Furthermore, we do protest, and we would have it recorded, that *we would willingly preserve the Ecclesiastical and Canonical policy ; if the Bishops would cease to tyrannise over the Churhes*. This our mind and desire shall excuse us with all posterity, both before God and all nations ; that it may not be imputed to us that the authority of Bishops is overthrown by us."

To the same effect does Prince George of Anhalt, a prominent leader of the Reformation on the Continent, exclaim :—"Would to God that as they carry the name and title of Bishops ; so they would show themselves *to be* Bishops of the Church ! Would to God that as the book of the Gospels is delivered to them, and laid upon their shoulders in ordination, so they would teach doctrines according thereunto, and would faithfully govern the Churches thereby ! *O how willingly*

would we receive them for our Bishops: and reverence them, obey them, and yield unto them their due jurisdiction and ordination."

This was evident also in the Discussions that took place at Worms and Ratisbone; wherein the degrees of Bishops, Archbishops, and Patriarchs are recommended *as profitable to preserve the Unity of the Church*. Concerning which Melancthon writes thus to Camerarius:—"By what right or law may we dissolve the Ecclesiastical policy, if the Bishops will grant us that which in reason they ought to grant? And though it were lawful for us to do so, yet surely it were not expedient. Luther was ever of this opinion."

And, that they unfeignedly meant what they said, may appear in respect to their dealing at that period with Michael Sidonius; whom the reforming Magistrates thrust out of his Bishopric because of his Popery; yet afterwards, when he faithfully embraced the Gospel they again restored him to that Ecclesiastical dignity. (Hist. Conf. Augsb: 1530, by Chytræum). And so in other instances. The judgment of Calvin on Church Government at the first, was the same as the Confession of Augsburg, to which he subscribed; and is likewise declared in his Epistle to Cardinal Sadolet; wherein he protests, that "if Bishops would so rule, as to submit themselves to Christ, then, if there be any that will not submit themselves to that Hierarchy reverently, and with the greatest obedience that may be, there is no kind of anathema whereof they are not worthy."

Likewise in his celebrated *Institutions* he states:—"That every province had an Archbishop amongst their Bishops; and moreover, that the Patriarchs were appointed in the Nicene Council, which were superior to Archbishops in order and dignity; that belongeth to the preservation of Discipline. (Lib. iv., Cap. iv., sec. 4.)

But did not Beza, who succeeded Calvin at Geneva, go beyond him, and utter bitter things against the Bishops? Yes, he did; but he qualifies his words, and explained himself that he meant the Popish Bishops only. For having spoken against their tyranny, he makes this exception:—"Yet *we do not accuse all Bishops and Archbishops, for what arrogancy were that?* Nay, so as they do but imitate the example of the old Bishops, and endeavour as much as they can to reform the House of God so miserably deformed, according to the rule of God's Word, why may we not acknowledge all of them (now so called Bishops and Archbishops), *obey them, and honour them with all reverence?* So far are we from that which some object against us most falsely and impudently, as though we took upon us to prescribe to any in any place our examples to be followed; like unto those unwise men, who account well of nothing but of that which they do themselves."

And concerning the Reformed Bishops of England he speaks thus:—"But if now the Reformed Churches of England do stand under propped with the authority of Bishops and Archbishops (as it happened to that

Church in our memory, would that it had more of that sort, not only famous martyrs of God, but also most excellent Pastors and Doctors :) *let her truly enjoy this singular blessing of God; which I wish may be perpetual to her.*" (De Divers Grad. Minist. contr. Sav. Cap. 21, sec. 2.)

The *early* Reformers abroad, then, were not opposed to Episcopacy in itself; nay, they would gladly have had it, if they could. They indeed had it in some places, and would have had it in others (if they had not been hindered), as more agreeable to the Word of God, and the ancient regimen of Christ's Church. What they objected to was the making use of the Episcopacy as an agency for the Papacy, and imposing its shameful and hateful exactions and corruptions on the Christians over whom the Bishops were set. They objected to their using lawful authority for an unlawful purpose—demanding obedience and belief in things and doctrines which they had no right to ask, much less to require under the threat of being cut off from the Church, or deprived of its Sacraments, and other ordinances. Had it not been for this, there is little doubt but that Episcopacy would have been maintained in the Reformed Churches abroad, as it is in this country.

Their successors and disciples—not distinguishing the difference between those Bishops who properly discharged the duties of their high office, and those who did not, but ruled their people according to the dictates of the Pope—in their ignorance condemned Episcopacy alto-

gether, not understanding that one was in accordance with Christ's will and design, and the other was of human origin only, born of ambition, contrary to Apostolic institution, and therefore rightly opposed; hence, we often find them condemning Prelacy as well as Papacy, and regarding one as bad as the other; and to be alike abjured; so that this mistaken view largely grew among the Reformed Churches abroad, spread to Scotland, and greatly troubled the Church of England, and even led to her overthrow for awhile.

But how was it that this sad misunderstanding, and perverse notion arose? How was it that the Reformers abroad, holding the views which they did, did not adopt Episcopacy? How was it that both the Lutherans and Calvinists came to have some other kind of Church Government among them, when their leaders or Fathers approved of Episcopacy? The promise of fruit was great, there seemed a good prospect of a return to primitive Christianity again; how was it that so little fruit was brought to maturity? How was it that when men looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? How was it that the Reformation—the grand design of which was to restore the Christian religion to the purity of the first ages—was so marred and diverted from its original design in many parts, and became the source only of further division and discord? How came it, that those who at the first seemed to be of one mind on all the great principles of religion, eventually took

different courses, which led to much misunderstanding afterwards; so much so, that their followers and successors, losing sight of the principles, with which the Reformers abroad started, should have set themselves to oppose those very principles, and become estranged from those with whom they should have lived as one Household in the Lord, hence causing greater disunity than ever? How, in short, was it that the return to the ancient basis of unity for Christians, which the first movement of the Reformation had in view, was so largely frustrated?

There can be but one answer to all these questions, and that is, that it was effected more or less through the agency of the Papacy, and the revolt from it, in various measures. Its tyranny and corruptions became so abhorrent to the people, that they thought they could not get far enough away from it, and began to dislike the agency, though which the Church of Rome tried to impose sinful terms upon them, or exclude them from the visible communion of the Church. Thus they grew up at last to hate the Episcopacy. Not because its authority was unlawful, any more than the Magistracy in any country, but because this lawful authority was so grossly abused. The one idea that had become fixed in the mind of the Church of Rome, and had grown so as to become part of its very being, was, that she alone must reign over all the Churches of the world, and that there must be no other union but in subjection to her rule. Now the principles of the Reformation were, as it is well

known, First, to accept the Faith of the Gospel as it was held in the Primitive Church, and to reject those corruptions which had since then been added to it, and which had no sanction or countenance from Scripture or the Primitive Church; and Secondly, to return to the Order and government of Christians as it had been received from the Apostles in the early Church; which would necessarily include leaving the rule in the hands of the several Bishops conjointly, each having independent authority in the Church in various parts, whereby subjection to one head or to the Pope should no longer be suffered. Hence this in short virtually involved the overthrow of the Papacy, and the establishment of ancient Catholicity. And therefore it was that the Church of Rome, and all those who adhered to the Papacy, resolved, and had but one fell purpose in view, from which they never seemed to swerve, to frustrate and bring to nothing, by one means or another, the designs of the Reformation, where they could not extirpate or stamp it out.

The devices and intrigues of the Papacy were many and various. They differed according to the power or influence it could acquire or exercise in various countries. During the middle ages the Popes had trifled with the authority of the Councils of Bishops, when bent upon a reformation of the Papacy, which had become so debased and corrupt as often to scandalize the Christian world. The Popes would pretend to fall in with their views, or promise that things should be differently ordered *while* the Councils were sitting; but when the

Councils were dissolved, would take no heed to the injunctions or decrees that were made, and let things go on in their evil courses as before, without any real endeavour to correct them; nay, would give them their countenance and support. And now that the Reformation designed the overthrow of the Papacy, a like policy was at the first adopted, and hopes held out that if they could come to some definite arrangement, things should be thoroughly altered; by this means time was gained to sow discord among them, and to make some grow faint-hearted.

The Bishops generally in the various countries had been bound on solemn oath to the Pope; and their interests on the one hand, and the fear of his displeasure on the other hand, led them to oppose the Reformation and cleave to the Papal interests: and so it happened, that, where the Reformation gained ground the Bishops generally were against it, and the people were left to themselves, or to such ministers as favoured the cause, to provide means for carrying on religious ordinances, and keeping the Reformation adherents together. Hence in the generality of cases the people made the best shift for themselves they could: which led to diversity of views and modes of action; for only in a few instances could Bishops be found to favour the Reformation: and the Papacy put every obstacle in the way of others obtaining them; for they judged rightly, that if they had the Episcopacy established among them, the Reformers would have become the better united as a body. Thus it was in Geneva, the Bishop and his

Clergy left the city by moonlight: and everything respecting religion was determined by the popular voice.

For, as "the learned and judicious Hooker" observes in the preface to his *Ecclesiastical Policy*:—"Neither King, nor Duke, nor nobleman had any authority or power over them, but officers chosen by the people out of themselves, to order all things by public consent. For spiritual government, *they had no laws at all agreed upon, but did what the pastors of their souls by persuasion could win them unto.* Calvin being admitted one of their preachers, and a Divinity reader among them, *considered how dangerous it was that the whole estate of that Church should hang still on so slender a thread, as the liking of an ignorant multitude is, if it have power to change whatsoever it listeth.*" He was not, therefore, satisfied with this state of things.

And he with one or two others whom he consulted, moved, and at last persuaded the people, "to bind themselves by solemn oath, first, never to admit Papacy among them again; and secondly, to live in obedience unto such orders concerning the exercise of their religion, and the form of their ecclesiastical government, as those, their true and faithful ministers of God's Word, had, agreeably to Scripture, set down for that end and purpose." It was not long, however, before a number of ambitious congregations refused to abide by this agreement, and desiring to be perfectly free to do as they severally liked or thought good, the people were stirred up to revolt against the order settled among them. But as Hooker says: it bred a great inconvenience, so much

so, that every later effort at reform "endeavoured to be certain degrees more removed from conformity with the Church of Rome, than the rest before had been: whereupon grew marvellous great dissimilitudes, and by reason thereof, jealousies, heart-burnings, jars, and discords among them . . . For by this means it came to pass, that one Church could not but accuse and condemn another of disobedience to the Will of Christ, in those things where manifest difference was between them."

This was an intolerable state of things; and Calvin and two others of his associates refused to administer the Holy Communion to such as would not quietly, without contradiction and murmur, submit themselves unto the orders, which their solemn oath had bound them to obey. And upon this these three were banished from Geneva.

These self-satisfied and turbulent people, however, after a few years, began to feel that they had made a mistake in resisting, and parting with such an able and learned man as Calvin. The senate of two hundred being assembled, crave for his return: and means were speedily adopted to get him among them again. But as the learned author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* says:—"He ripely considered how gross a thing it were for men of his quality, wise and grave men, to live with such a multitude, and to be tenants at will under them, as both himself and others, as ministers, had been. For the remedy of which inconvenience, he gave them plainly to understand, that if he did become their Teacher again, they must be content to admit a complete form

of Discipline, which *both they and their Pastors* should now be solemnly sworn to observe for ever after. Of which Discipline the main and principle parts were these : A standing Ecclesiastical Court to be established ; perpetual judges in that Court to be their ministers ; others of the people to be chosen annually (twice so many in number as they) to be judges together with them in the same court ; these two sorts to have the care of all men's manners, power of determining all kind of ecclesiastical causes, and authority to convent, to control, to punish, as far as with excommunication, whomsoever they should think worthy, none either small or great being excepted."

And, continues Hooker, " This device, I see not, how the wisest at that time living could have bettered, *if we duly consider what the present estate of Geneva did then require.*" That is, Calvin did the best he could at the time, under the circumstances, and with the materials he had to deal with. The Geneva platform, then, was not founded on choice but from necessity, because at the time of its institution, no reformed Bishop could be had at Geneva, or any means be procured of having one canonical consecrated. And therefore is justifiable no longer than while there is such necessity. But these fanatical Reformers, " these twice sworn men," in Geneva chaffed under the Discipline and supervision that Calvin had instituted ; and drew up not many years after another decree to establish something like Congregational Independency ; and singularly enough to make the Senate—over whose members the Pastors could exercise some

influence—the body of final appeal. This was done at first that the Discipline might be relaxed in favour of one Bertelier. When Calvin heard of it, he said, “Before this decree take place, either my blood or banishment shall sign it.” And again, two days after, before the great communion was celebrated, he exclaimed:—“Kill me, if ever this hand do reach forth the things that are holy to them whom the Church hath judged despisers.” Whereupon Bertelier was advised by his friends to withdraw for a time.

And thus in other cases, some less learned and hot-headed enthusiasts, imagining that everything that the Romanists did was wrong, were for rejecting much that was good and sound both in doctrine and practice, while at the same time, being left to themselves, they took up new ways and views of religion for which they had no warrant, either from Scripture or from the example of the early Christians; this not only caused them to be divided among themselves, but from the rest of Christendom. It was thus among many in the Lutheran communion, as well as the Calvinistic.

Their detestation of Popery at that period is not to be wondered at. The Papacy was not only an unwarrantable and ambitious assumption of power on the part of *one* Church, which had no such authority from Christ or His Apostles, and was not suffered or acknowledged among the Primitive Christians; but at this time, had become especially depraved, and was not only immoral to a frightful extent, but *demoralizing*. Let men but read something of the history of the Popes at and

before the time of the Reformation, and they will see that the Papacy at its centre was foul and abominable in the extreme; and of course its influence was destructive to vital Christianity; that it had a name to live, and was dead; so that all who loved purity, truth, integrity, and uprightness were shocked and horrified at its proceedings. Besides, the tyranny and avarice that were practised made men dread to be under its power, or to have anything to do with it.

And yet the Papists in many ways and instances gained an advantage over the Reformers. The former were a compact, determined, desperate body, and would frequently stick at no intrigue or wickedness to gain their ends. The latter were divided, changeable, having many masters or leaders, without a united policy or definite line for all to go by, and often at variance with each other. The supporters of the Papacy were crafty, politic, merciless, and their word or promise not to be depended upon. If the Reformers had been able throughout to have established the Episcopacy, as of old, and co-operated together through the Bishops in some well defined course, taking even the Confession of Augsburg for the most part, as their basis, or better still the basis of the Church in Primitive times, they would have been united, strong, and irresistible. The Romanists knew this, and did all they could to prevent Episcopacy being universally accepted by those in favour of the Reformation.

To comprehend this part of our subject, which is of great moment, we must enter somewhat more speci-

fically into the various means and ways by which the Papal party endeavoured to accomplish their purpose, in overthrowing the Reformation, and the changing fortunes that attended its efforts.

To gain the good will of Kings and Princes the Popes began to bestow upon them flattering titles. Thus after the repeal of the Pragmatic sanction, Louis XI. of France was styled by the Pope, "Most Christian." Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain were entitled, "Most Catholic." Julius II. conferred on James of Scotland, the title of "Protector of the Christian Faith": and as it is well known Henry VIII. of England was styled "Defender of the Faith." And thus in later days the ruler of France was called "The eldest son of the Church." The Pope hoping thereby to secure their aid.

And in those countries where the rulers were found to be in favour of the Reformation, or opposed to coercing their subjects, the Papacy plainly gave them to understand, that there would be no peace for them, if they threw the whole weight of their authority into supporting the movement. And this, as we shall see, was no bare threat, but in some cases was put into force; by getting those bigotted partizans of the Papacy to oppose their lawful sovereigns, and stirring up rebellion among their subjects; or by inducing some of the Papal sovereigns of Europe to make war upon those who tried to overthrow the Papacy altogether. Thus Philip of Spain was induced to make war against Elizabeth; and, what was called the Invincible Armada

was fitted out, and sent, as already noticed, to subdue England, and establish the Papacy in this country. And this was done after the Romish Church had sought by every means in its power to alienate the people from their lawful Queen and raise up a rebellion. Hence, from fear of trouble and disturbance in their several countries, the various rulers on the Continent feared to set aside the Bishops pledged to the Papacy, much less to introduce of their own accord Bishops who would support the Reformation. Some terrible examples of vengeance had been shewn in openly opposing the Papacy, and few dared or cared to risk the consequences.

Besides, most of the Monks and Friars of various orders were generally in favour of the Papacy, since they were dependent upon it. Hence, on this account, as well as because of various irregularities and abuses, they were disbanded in many places by the Protestants, and the monasteries broken up.

Moreover, during this struggle with the Reformation, the Jesuits, who had lately become an established Order by the Papacy, began to increase and spread themselves in France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and other countries, where by secret means or under feigned characters, they endeavoured to spread disaffection and division among those who joined the Reformation: and especially in England did they seek to stir up strife, and influence other bodies of Christians to oppose the rule and efforts of the Bishops, because they would not submit to the Papacy. The two objects which they

had in view were, first, to bring discord and division into the ranks of those who resolutely withstood the Papacy, and secondly, to rally and rouse up those who still had some lingering attachment to it. They were a dangerous element in any country then, and they are still felt to be so, because they are bound to yield an implicit and blind allegiance to the Court of Rome, as well as to pay unquestioning and unlimited obedience to the General of the Society. And though some of its first members were remarkable men, and justly gained a reputation for their zeal in the cause of Christ, as for instance—Francis Xavier, who in 1522 went as a missionary to India, and was justly called the Apostle of the Indians; yet afterwards they were almost entirely occupied in furthering the interests of the Papacy in various countries, and bringing confusion and discord among those most zealous for the Reformation.

A college was founded for their special training at Douay, in the Netherlands. But this was not sufficient: the Pope wanted to have some of them under his own supervision; and among others an English college was established in Rome, A.D. 1579, endowed with a rich abbey, and placed under the care of the Jesuits. No student was admitted into this college until he had first pledged himself to return to England on the completion of his studies, and there, as directed by the General, promote the interests of the Papacy. The men were carefully selected, exclusively prepared, and incited with religious enthusiasm for this purpose.

The earlier students—some of them men of middle age—were soon sent forth, and others rapidly followed. In 1580, when it was determined to create a schism in the Church of England, two English Jesuits were sent forth to their native country, Parsons and Campian, one about thirty-eight, and the other about forty years old, who adopted feigned names, and assumed various disguises. They both succeeded in reaching London, where they separated, the one travelling through the Northern, the other through the Southern Counties. They usually took up their abodes in the dwellings of one of the nobles, favourable to the Papacy. Information was given of their coming, but precautions were taken to receive them as strangers; a few of the Romish adherents were invited to meet them, to whom they would administer the Sacrament, and then preach a sermon respecting their faith and fealty to the Pope. They rarely stayed another night. Secret conferences were held, and the immediate result of their proceedings were, that those whom they could influence left the English Church, and the Romish schism was effected.

Nor was this the worst result of their mission; they continued to stir up sedition and rebellion, and sought to estrange the people from their allegiance to their sovereign. It was not for their being Papists merely that they were pursued and punished, but because they were enemies and traitors to their country, and sought to involve her in trouble and ruin. They fostered insurrection; and the result of their teaching and sentiments were but too manifest in the following reign, when

several gentlemen among the Papists were implicated with Guy Fawkes, as he was called, in an attempt to blow up the House of Parliament, when the King, the Nobles, and Commons should be assembled together. A most diabolical design; which horrified not only the country at large, but the Papists themselves, who for the most part were loyal and faithful subjects; and into which plot there is little doubt the Papist gentlemen would never have been drawn, had it not been for the instigation of the Jesuits. They were rightly banished from this country, and it became penal for any of them to be found in England. This had been done in the reign of Elizabeth, for swarms of Jesuits had come into the country to spread their dangerous sentiments, and in 1585 they were all again commanded to depart within forty days, under penalty of being punished as traitors.

The Jesuits in like manner found their way into other countries, and were at the bottom of much of the trouble and division, the disaffection and disorder that ensued. Switzerland and the Netherlands may be especially noticed. But they were found also carrying on their operations in Germany, France, Spain, and Austria, where traces of their influence were soon to be discovered in all public affairs. For a time they often succeeded in furthering the interests of the Papacy; but in many parts they became so obnoxious and dangerous to the welfare of the several countries wherein they sought to disseminate their doctrines, that they were expelled. There is no need to enter into details, for the facts could be easily substantiated.

But in those countries where the leading people and sovereigns that bear rule were Papists, merciless and fiendish attempts were made to crush the Reformation altogether by the relentless persecution and death of those who were conscientiously attached to it. Allusion has been made to the terrible massacre in Paris of the Huguenots or Reformers on St. Bartholomew's Day, A.D. 1572; when so many were slaughtered. It was a frightful crisis, but the horrors *in Spain* that were perpetrated seem to have exceeded it in barbarity and cruelty. The Pope had ordered that the Inquisition should be revived in all countries where it could be enforced, and in Spain it was carried to its utmost length. We have seen that some of the leading Bishops in this country were opposed to the proceedings of the Council of Trent, and that not a few of the people were inclined to Lutheranism. But Philip II., one of the most bigoted sovereigns that ever reigned, the same that sent out his Armada to subdue England to the Papacy, had almost despotic rule, and permitted the Inquisition to do what it could to extinguish all traces of the Reformation.

Pope Paul IV. importuned the Kings of Spain and France to settle the Inquisition in their dominions, as *the only means to extirpate heresies*; and at his death he recommended nothing to them but the Inquisition, which he said was the only expedient to preserve the Church; exhorting them to use their best endeavours to get it established in Italy, and wherever they could. He used to say, that *it was the principal secret and mystery of the*

Papacy. But whether it were so or not, it cannot be denied that the Roman Church was in a great measure beholden to it, in those countries where it gained the upper hand. Philip II. was eagerly bent in rooting the Reformation out of Spain. He no sooner arrived from Flanders, than thirteen of the leading persons belonging to it were put to death in Seville; and afterwards, at Valladolid, he caused twenty-eight of the *chief nobles* of the country to be burnt in his presence, hoping at once to strike terror into the minds of those who were inclined to this persuasion. The nobility of Spain at that time had a great aversion to the See of Rome; but the extreme severity of Philip made them conceal their inward resentments: and those who are acquainted with that portion of history, must confess that the Church of Rome is obliged for its unity in Spain to the memory of that Prince, and the continuance of the Inquisition from his time till a very late date.

If we are to credit what Llorente says, the number of victims of the Spanish Inquisition, from A.D. 1481 to 1808, amounted to 341,021 persons. At the latter date it was put down by Napoleon, but was re-established in 1814 by Ferdinand VII. It was not only the number that suffered, but the cruel ordeals and tortures through which their victims had to pass, in order to make them recant, and become subject to the Papacy, that made the Inquisition so much hated and dreaded. And that so many withstood all these horrible measures, and remained constant to the principles of

the Reformation, proves what a deep and abiding hold it had taken upon the hearts of the people.

When Charles V. died, Philip II. succeeded to the dominion of the Netherlands, and after thrusting the Spaniards and those who favoured the Papacy into almost every office connected with the Church and State, he set up the Inquisition here also, with the hope of exterminating the Protestants. And during its infamous operations it is said that about 50,000 persons suffered for their faith. But to the credit of the majority of the Romanists in that country, they along with the Reformers hated the Inquisition, and protested against its being set up among them. The Dutchmen and the Belgians said it might suit Spain and Italy, but it was not suitable to Flanders, nor to other nations in the North of Europe, who were naturally more inclined to liberty than the people of the South. And Philip was intreated to use milder measures than the fire and the sword. But he was in no wise inclined to do this, and he told one of his ministers who ventured to reason with him about it, that he would sooner lose his kingdom than rule over a set of heretics.

Those attached to the Reformation in the Netherlands had hitherto lived peaceably with the Romanists, and a firm determination was come to, to resist by all possible means, the measures for the extinction of those who would not submit to the Papacy. In the early part of the year 1566 a powerful Confederacy was formed, with the Prince of Orange, and the Counts of

Egmont and Horn at their head, with the avowed object of putting down the detestable tribunal of the Inquisition, and in this the Romish party acted with the Protestants; though they do not seem to have joined in the more secret design which the Confederacy had in view, to recover the constitutional rights of the country. In the mean time the Spanish garrisons were ordered to proceed against the Protestants; and whenever the latter met in worship, they came with arms in their hands, and even the women and children had weapons of defence with them. This state of things brought about a civil war; and after several encounters, in which first one side and then another gained the advantage, amid much suffering, disquietude, and bloodshed, the Protestants still held their own. Upon this Philip despatched another army, under the noted Duke of Alva, who was "as admirable as a military commander, as he was detestable as a bigot, or a passive instrument of despotism." And for a time the Confederacy had to give way, as they were unable to withstand the disciplined troops brought against them. At the approach of Alva, the Prince of Orange retreated to his principality of Nassau; while Egmont and Horn, who stayed to justify their conduct, were cast into prison; and the rest of the leaders fled to England and France.

Much the same state of things happened in France, both before and after the atrocious massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. For shortly afterwards several of the Princes of Germany found it necessary

to come to the help of the Huguenots, who soon took the field with an army of 20,000, and before long they found themselves strong enough to establish what was regarded as a settled and independent government in the heart of France; and by the intervention of Queen Elizabeth pacific arrangements were come to, whereby the Huguenots were to be permitted to worship God publicly in their own way; yet this lasted but for a while. Henry III. succeeded his brother, and placing himself at the head of the Catholic League, as it was called, in 1577 annulled at one blow the privileges granted to the Huguenots, who thereupon again flew to arms. He was rightly detested as an enemy to the Protestants; and Elizabeth of England was intreated to afford them succour; but her hands at that time were fully occupied in the affairs of the Netherlands.

The Prince of Orange, after a prolonged and tremendous struggle, succeeded in establishing the independence of Holland and Zealand; and the Duke of Alva was recalled to wither and die, under the frowns and ingratitude of his master, Philip of Spain, for whom he had waded in blood. The Huguenots of France, however, were not left defenceless. The King of Navarre and Prince Condé placed themselves at their head, and so kept the Papal party in check. Henry III. moreover quarrelled with the Duke of Guise, and causing him to be assassinated, made peace with the Protestants. When Henry III. died in 1589, he was succeeded by the King of Navarre, who was the next legal heir to the throne of France, which he assumed

under the name of Henry IV. Those, however, who had joined the Catholic League refused to acknowledge him, and for years contested his sovereignty. He was in constant conflict with the League, and had not Queen Elizabeth supplied him with both money and troops at this crisis, it is possible that he would have been deposed.

He made many concessions to the Papal party; and eventually in 1595, to put an end to the civil wars which were devastating that fair country, and to secure his throne, he professed himself to be a Papist. This greatly incensed the Huguenots, who threatened to withdraw their support; and Elizabeth charged him with perfidy and double dealing; but when the French King agreed to maintain an offensive and defensive war against Philip, so long as Philip should remain at war, she was fain to be satisfied: and when Henry gave an enlarged toleration to his Protestant subjects their wrath was generally appeased. It was regarded more as an act of policy on Henry IV.'s part, than a matter of conscience; for he greatly befriended the Huguenots. In 1598 he effected and published the celebrated Edict of Nantes, as the basis of their religious liberty: and by it he confirmed to them all the privileges ever before conceded; he gave them equal civil rights, and equal advantages in the universities and public schools as his other subjects enjoyed.

Later still, in the history of the Gallican Church, though the supremacy of the Pope was acknowledged to a certain extent, yet in a large assembly, A.D. 1682,

it was decreed that the Pope had no such authority over kings as he assumed, and moreover, absolutely denied his power to depose them. They clearly denied his Infallibility likewise; and contended that he was subject to Councils, even to be deposed himself and excommunicated by them, as had been the case in times past. Further, they asserted that his supremacy was limited, not only by the Canons of Councils, but by the rules and orders of *every National Church*. And Leslie, in his correspondence with the Bishop of Meaux A.D. 1703, reminds him of these decrees, and shows him that *it was not from conscience but from compulsion that the learned Clergy of the French Church were obliged to submit to the dictates of the Pope*.

For addressing him he says:—"But, my Lord, how can this bring us to own his Supremacy, even in the limited sense of the Gallican Church, when we know at the same time that he will not submit to it; nay, that he stood out against it, till the necessity of affairs pressing your king in the last Confederacy against him, the Bishops of France *were forced to sign a retraction of these decrees*; till which time the Pope refused to preconize any of their Bishops? And your Lordship must know better than we do, that *it was the Pope who set up the Confederacy against France*, chiefly on the points of these decrees. And the first article of what was called *The Resolution of the Princes, Allies, and Confederates*, which was taken at the Assembly at the Hague, February 4, 1691, was in these words: 'That no peace be made with Louis XIV. till he has

made reparation to the Holy See for whatsoever he has acted against it; and till he annul and make void all those infamous proceedings against the Holy Father, Innocent XI.'

"And this was agreeable to the actings of his predecessors. Particularly in France, whose learned Church always contested their liberties against the plenitude of the Papal Supremacy, which sought to swallow them up. And it is very observable, that though the Holy League in France lasted during the reigns of six Popes, every one of these Popes was for the League against the King. And Cardinal Cajetan, legate there for the Pope, in the year 1593, made this his main argument to justify that Rebellion, that so many Popes had concurred in it. This we are told by D'Avila, in his History of the Civil Wars of France (Lib. 13). But I will trouble your Lordship no further with instances of Popes fomenting Rebellions of subjects against their natural Princes, and their deposing of Kings, on pretence of this their universal Supremacy. These things are well known to your Lordship. And we do believe, that the whole Gallican Church does abhor and detest such doctrines." (Leslie Theol. Works, Vol. I. 574.)

I need not bring illustrations of the struggle that the Reformation had with the Papacy in Germany, which is more generally known than some of the former events, nor need I allude to the barbarous and inhuman manner in which the agents of the Papacy persecuted the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont,

particularly in the years 1655, 1656, and 1696 which seemed to portend nothing less than the extinction of that unfortunate and yet pious people. The few Waldenses that survived this Papal tyranny were indebted for their existence and support to the help and intercessions made for them by the English and Dutch Governments, and also by the Swiss cantons, who solicited the clemency of the Duke of Savoy on their behalf.

Enough has been said, however, to shew how it was that a return to the ancient basis of Christian Unity was not more generally effected throughout Christendom; how the original design of the Reformation was diverted in many countries from the course at the first proposed to be taken; and how instead of its adherents being united together as one man for the recovery of the Church from the debased and debasing condition into which it had fallen, they were parted asunder and divided, weakened and estranged; not only in their various degrees of recoil from the tyranny and corruptions of the Papacy, and their desire to be thoroughly purged from its abuse; but by the secret machinations, the political intrigues, and the continued and barbarous persecutions and treatment received at the hands of the Papacy, which thirsted for the blood of those who would not submit to her rule and dictates.

The outcome of the Reformation came far short of the expectations, and in many countries it became far otherwise than was at first designed, which may account to some extent for the divisions and dissensions

among the Protestants, as also for the ascendancy of the Papacy in many parts, after its struggle with the Reformation. But from a Christian point of view, there is no cause for triumph in this ascendancy but of shame and reproach; unless we can bring ourselves to approve of those measures whereby the Apostacy of Mahomedanism gained the upper-hand in many parts of the world, and triumphed for a time over Christianity, and of those crafty and often discreditable means by which some men gain an advantage over their fellow citizens, but which all honest, upright, Christian men will reprobate and eschew.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT STILL HINDERS A RETURN TO UNITY.

THERE are still at work several forces that prevent Christians being one body in Christ. The Papacy is as persistent as ever in seeking to subject all she can to her rule, and in asserting that union with her is the only true unity. And say what you will, bring forth the plainest proofs you can, nothing will convince her that she is radically wrong; and that she is not following the unity which Christ and His Apostles set forth in the Church at the beginning, and accepted by the Primitive Christians.

I.—It is not disputed that there are many good men who still adhere to the communion of the Roman Church; and though it is their countenance that gives some weight to its influence, it does not alter its principles, or the policy and measures by which the Papacy was built up in times past, and caused so much contention and division in the Christian world. And though the power of the Papacy of late years has been greatly restrained, and is not allowed to interfere so much in the internal affairs of the nations of Europe; nor can she order the secular arm to do its behests as formerly, yet it does not seem to have renounced any of its heresies, or its ambitious designs to be supreme, and to be regarded as having an infallible teacher: but is as pertinacious as ever in advancing them. It has had to alter its tactics to meet the

tendency of the age, but it is none the less clear that the Papacy has forged fresh chains to bind those who own her authority more closely to herself, so that they cannot easily set themselves free; and that she uses as much craft and subtilty in her movements as ever in gaining influence and power over others; not only in obtaining converts, but in covertly dealing with the people and their rulers, so as to further her designs. The fact should not be overlooked, that as late as 13th July, 1886, Leo XIII. issued a Pontifical Brief, re-establishing all the privileges, immunities, and exemptions accorded to the Jesuits by his predecessors.

II.—And as to other Non-conformists, though there are some leading brethren among them yearning for a return to some definite basis of Unity, yet are there others none the less bent than ever upon keeping up their dissensions and divisions, both in doctrine and practice—and upon removing themselves further off from the principles of the Reformation than at the first, and do obstinately object to several things which the early Protestants would gladly have preferred if the opportunity had been afforded them—as if their own interests and standing were concerned in it. Having no settled anchorage—no abiding rule of Church order for all, no fixed form of doctrine to hold by, except what from time to time they may change, or think to be right, and what may be popular, a marked decadence may be noticed in many bodies; not only in thinking that liberty of conscience gives them the right to take any

further departure from the ancient rule and bond of Christian unity, than the early Reformers thought necessary, and thereby multiplying divisions; but in objecting to doctrines which were generally received by the early Christians and the Reformers as the truth of Scripture, and in introducing others which have no such warrant.

The Principles of the Reformation need to be better understood and adhered to, than they seem to be. For the chief leaders in this great movement, while protesting with all their might against the errors and corruptions of the Papacy, did not purpose in the first instance to overthrow or set aside Apostolic order or Primitive Christianity, but rather to restore and establish them in the Church of Christ. While they wished and insisted upon removing the abuses and excrescences which through the domination of the Papacy had been forced upon the Church, they were anxious to continue and preserve what might be called the Fundamentals of the Christian religion, whereby unity and order might be maintained. In rejecting the authority of the Church of Rome as illegal and unwarranted, they did not design to relieve men from submission to all lawfully constituted authority in the Church, when exercised on the Gospel plan, and as the early Christians had received it. They did not intend that every Christian should become a law unto himself, to choose what, or any form of religion he liked, and thus break up the great communion of Christians into so many factions, and thereby rend the body of Christ.

The idea of this was abhorrent to them. This was but an abuse and a perversion of the principles of the Reformation.

It is argued by the Romanists, says a learned author, and too often ignorantly or artfully admitted by others, that the principles of the Reformation, in general, were subversive to all Church authority, and all unity of Faith and Communion. Some assure us that its fundamental principle was the absolute right of every individual to deduce his own religion from the Bible only, to the exclusion of Creeds, Articles, Primitive Custom, and the authority of the Church; and to maintain with unlimited freedom, whatever doctrines appear to his own private judgment most consistent with Scripture. This pretended principle of the Reformation is entirely overthrown by the public declarations and acts of the early Reformers, to which it is diametrically opposed. This can be abundantly proved.

There is little doubt but that those who succeeded the early Reformers largely adopted *this false principle*, and thought they were going on the lines of the Reformation, when they attempted to purify the Church still further from the remains of what they *imagined* to be Papistical, as the Puritans, Presbyterians, and Independents did, in and previous to the time of the Commonwealth, which led to the overthrow of the Church. There may have been some individuals at the first who held these opinions; but it is a calumny to say that the early Reformers held these views, for the direct contrary is nearer the truth, as can be amply shewn.

The first design of the Reformers was, that they should continue as one united compact body in the Church of Christ, and as part thereof, without being subject to the intolerance of the Church of Rome, and being compelled to acknowledge its errors, which they did not consider lawful, but had been imposed upon them by various crafty and discreditable means. The Churches of various countries had originally been independent of each other, though closely connected as long as they kept to the Constitution and Canons of the Church as originally settled. And in claiming for themselves their original birth-right, they were resolved to free themselves from Papal bondage and Papal innovations of all kinds, that were not in keeping with Scripture and the Primitive Church. This may be observed in the broad features of the Reformation at first effected in England. The reforming bodies in different countries abroad, however, being left to themselves, and being constantly thwarted and opposed by the Romanists in various ways, began to differ in some important matters. To obviate and correct this tendency as much as possible, and to preserve some of the essential principles of unity, *which they might all keep in view and be guided by*, in their fierce struggles, they laid down certain articles of religion to abide by. This was done in the Confession of Augsburg, to which some allusion has been already made. Differences had arisen, especially between the German and Swiss Reformers. The Emperor Charles V. had urged Pope Clement to convoke a General Council for the Scrip-

tural determination of all Controversies; but he would not: and on the contrary, urged the Emperor to proceed against the Reformers and compel them to obey the Papacy. This the Emperor thought to be a violation of the Imperial laws, and would not that any of his subjects should be condemned unheard; and therefore he called a Diet of the German Princes, and leading Divines of the Reformation. This was held in the Bishop's Palace at Augsburg, A.D. 1530.

The subscribers to the Confession, in their preface, state that it was drawn up, that "matters might be reduced to *Christian concord*, that *hereafter* the same sincere and true religion might be professed among them, and, that as they serve under one Christ, *so in one Christian Church they might live in Unity and peace.*"

Then after recounting the various Articles contained in it, to some of which we have already drawn attention, they proceed:—"This is the summary of the doctrine taught among us: and it appears from the exposition we have just made, that it contains nothing contrary to Scripture; and that *it agrees with the Catholic Church*, and even with the Roman Church, as far as is known to us by their writings. This being so, those who wish that we should be condemned as heretics are very unjust." Here it should be noticed that they draw a distinction between the Catholic Church and the Church of Rome; and that though they reject or will not accept the errors and corruptions of the latter, they bring forward no new doctrine, no other form of Church Government but what the

Catholic Church has ever held, and which the Roman Church, as part of it, was willing to accept also; hence, there was no real cause for their being at that time judged to be *heretics*.

And continuing their address, they say:—"If there be any dispute between us, *it is not upon those Articles of Faith, but upon those abuses that have been introduced into the Church, and which we reject.* This, therefore, is not a sufficient reason to authorise the Bishops not to tolerate us, since we are agreed in the tenets of Faith, which we have set forth. There never has been an exact uniformity of exterior practice since the beginning of the Church, and we preserve the greater part of the established usages. It is, therefore, a calumny to say that we have abolished them all. But as all the world complained of the abuses that had crept into the Church, *we have corrected those only* which we could not tolerate with a good conscience; and we entreat your Majesty to hear what the abuses are which we have retrenched, and the reasons we had for doing this."

They then proceed to state the abuses insisted upon by the Church of Rome, of which they complain. The First is the denial of the Cup in the Holy Communion to the Laity. The Second is, the Enforced Celibacy of the Clergy: and so on. In their saying above, that "there never has been an exact uniformity of exterior practice since the beginning of the Church," history will bear them out; and the Church of England seems to be of the same opinion, for in her XXXIVth Article,

she states that "It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly alike ; for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversity of country and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word."

But observe further, that they who signed the Confession assert, that "the greater part of the established usages, (*i.e.*, excluding those open to abuse) *we preserve.*" In their XIVth Article, they affirm also "that no man ought to teach publicly in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless rightly called." And this also was the course followed in the English Reformation, which took place a few years afterwards ; and in support of this course and statement, the Church of England in the above named Article, condemns any one "that offendeth against the Common Order of the Church." Hence, while "every Particular or National Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish Ceremonies and Rites of the Church, ordained only by men's authority ; so that all things be done to edifying :"—there is no license or authority to alter or change the Constitution or Government of the Church as established by Christ and His Apostles, and as it was received and upheld in the Primitive Church, and for many generations afterwards. And this is the rule which must commend itself to all Christians, and ought to have been observed by the Church of Rome on one side, as well as by the foreign Reformers and all true Protestants on the other side.

We grant that the Foreign Reformers had tremendous difficulties to encounter. Before another year had come round, Charles V. found that it was more to his interest to form a coalition with the States in communion with the Church of Rome; and so the Reformers lost hope in him, and could not depend upon him for any succour or defence. The fact was that many of the Bishops were rich and powerful Barons also, and not only exercised great influence upon others from their position, but could withhold the necessary succours to enable the Emperor to carry on his wars and his government with efficiency; and though his judgment might approve of the step taken by the Reformers, he nevertheless threw the weight of his authority into the scale of the Romanists, though the Protestant Princes in Germany kept him in check.

Our steadfastness to a cause is the more displayed, however, by holding on to our principles under adverse circumstances, and amid temptations to take a contrary course. And this steadfastness was largely displayed by the early Reformers. They conclude their address at Augsburg by promising, that should their present endeavours be abortive, they shall willingly obey the command to attend a General Council, whenever it might be summoned: not intending by their Confession to abandon the appeal they had already made to the assembly. And thus, when the Council of Trent met, the Reformers sent in 1551 Ambassadors and Theologians to plead their cause: but a hearing was refused them. Thus it is apparent, that these Reformers did not

ignore the Church or her authority, but appealed to her, as Luther had previously done, from the usurpations and tyranny of the Papacy to what was designed to be a General Council.

They did not design to separate from the Church, but to continue *in* her as a Reforming body, opposed to the usurpations and abuses of the Papacy: but living under the rule of Bishops—just as John Wesley at first designed the Wesleyans to keep to the Church—and many endeavours were made by the Reformers to keep together not only as a united body, but to remain *united to the Church*. Seven years after their meeting at Augsburg, a number of them met at Smalcald; and while they rejected the authority of the Pope, they approved of that of the Bishops. In the Articles drawn up by Luther (Art. iv.), it is said, "*The Church can never be better governed and preserved, than when we live under one head, Jesus Christ, and all Bishops equal in office, though unequal in gifts, are most perfectly united in diligence, concord of doctrine, &c The Apostles were equal, and afterwards the Bishops in all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above them.*"

At Ratisbon, in 1541, several Theologians on both sides,—that is, on the side of the Papacy, and that of the Reformation,—met together, discussed matters amicably, and agreed on many of the disputed points. The Bishops of Germany, however, in a harsh manner, rejected the Articles agreed upon: but the German people and their Princes besought the Emperor to

present them to the Papal Nuncio, and entreated that the other articles in debate should be settled *in a National Synod* of Germany. The Protestants avowed their opinion that there might easily be an agreement on all points in debate; and that some arrangement might be come to: while even the Papal Nuncio held out a hope *that they should all agree*. (See Fleury 139, sec. 98,—102, 103, 105.)

All these things prove, as it has been justly said, that the Lutherans did not voluntarily separate from the Church: and that at all events, for *a long time*, they desired to be united in full communion with her. No small number of Protestants, in succeeding ages, consider them to have gone to some unjustifiable lengths, and made far too large concessions for the sake of peace: but the truth is, they were deeply and sensibly impressed with the evils of separation, and of its contradiction to the Divine Will—to the fervent prayer of our Saviour, that all who believed on Him *might be one*—and felt that no obstacles, except those which arose from certain, clear, and irrefragible necessity, ought to prevent the unity of Christians.

Nor was this feeling confined to the Reformers of Germany. Those in France had the same reverence for the authority of the Church, apart from the errors and abuses of the Papacy, for in the GALLICAN CONFESSION they state, “we approve in this mystery (the Trinity) *whatever those four ancient Councils determined*; and all the sects condemned from the Word of God by *those ancient holy Doctors*, such as Athanasius, Hilary, Cyril,

Ambrose, and others, we detest." (c. vi.) THE BELGIC CONFESSION speaks of the psuedo-Christians and heretics, Marcion, Manes, Praxeas, Sabellius, Samosatenus, Arius, and others, *who were rightly and deservedly condemned by the Orthodox Fathers* (c. ix.) THE POLISH CONFESSION says:—"We receive as a sure and undoubted interpretation of Scripture, the Nicene or Constantinopolitan Creed . . . to which we acknowledge the Athanasian Creed to be Consonant: also the Confessions of the *Synods of Ephesus and Chalcedon*; also whatever *the Fifth or Sixth Synods* opposed to the remains of the Nestorians and Eutychians, whatever *the Synods of Milevis and Orange* taught against the Pelagians from the Scriptures, *whatever the Primitive Church, from the Apostolic age believed and taught with an unanimous notorious consent, as a necessary article of Faith, the same also we profess to believe, and to teach from the Scriptures.*" (Declar: Thorson 1.)

These first Reformers, therefore, could not justly be accused of schism, nor yet of heresy, when they were wishful to abide by the decisions of the early Councils, and the *practice* and *doctrines* of the Primitive Christians. For no real charge of one or the other could be produced against them or substantiated. But what could they do when the Bishops and others in favour of the Papacy treated them as heretics, and separated them from their communion? This was the case in most of the Reformed communities abroad. Thus were they treated in Zurich and other parts of Switzerland. In France and Belgium, those who

embraced the tenets of the Reformation were not only considered heretics, and expelled from the Church, but were also severely and cruelly persecuted. And so it would have been in Germany afterwards, in the time of Ferdinand, had it not been for the timely interference of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, who came forward as the champion of the Reformers. All who remained steadfast to their principles would have been tortured or cut down by the sword; and Germany, though so thoroughly a Protestant country would have become like Spain, wholly subjected to the Papacy.

If we rightly understand the position of the early Reformers, we shall acquit them of any design to cause separation and divisions in the Church. For they were forcibly ejected from the Church, as it has been said, *by an abuse of authority, and on unwarrantable grounds*. Under such circumstances they had no remedy, but were obliged to remain as distinct communities until God should see fit to restore them to union with the rest of the Church. They are, says one, who has thoroughly considered the matter, *to be regarded as brethren*, separated indeed from the external communion of a large portion of the Catholic Church without their own fault, but internally, not cut off from it, and consequently still in the way of salvation.

But while this is maintained, we are not to conclude or allow that these separate communities can constitute themselves, in a proper sense, Churches of Christ. From the very circumstances, their position could only be regarded as extraordinary, temporary,

and also as justifiable, on *the plea of necessity*. Treated as they were, they were compelled for their spiritual necessities to contract some provisional system adapted to the exigencies of their case; and though they have not a proper succession of ministers, lawfully ordained, and called, as was instituted in the Church of old, yet far be it from us to blame them for any deficiency in this respect, when they were designedly prevented from obtaining proper ordination; nor would it be right to assert that there was any sinful intrusion on the sacred office, when under such absolute necessity they resorted to unusual methods to supply their wants.

It is, however, a questionable proceeding, when, after being so constantly thwarted and opposed, they contended that their communities arising from these provisional and temporary arrangements, should be considered Churches of Christ, and their ministry be accounted of a valid or permanent character, which would have been set aside by themselves at first, had they been able to obtain recognition from the other Churches of Christendom, and thereby obtained a proper government by Bishops, as constituted at the beginning by the Apostles. How could either their ministry or the government of these reiforming bodies be considered as settled on any right basis, when so contrary to the received practice and principles of the Church, not only from the beginning, but for generations afterwards? They endeavoured afterwards, it is true, to persuade themselves and others that their system was just as good and valid as the Church of

Christ, so as to strengthen their position; and caught eagerly at one or two passages in Scripture, and one or two quotations from the Fathers, which they misinterpreted, but which seemed to countenance what they contended for. But they must have been aware that the weight of authority, and the example of more than 1500 years were against them, and therefore they must have had serious doubts about the validity of their ministry and Church government.

There is no doubt that the loss of the Episcopacy greatly hindered the cause of the Reformation on the Continent; and it was the knowledge of this, that made the Romanists so persistent in trying to prevent their obtaining it. Brett, on *Church Government*, says: "I have reason to believe that if Episcopacy had been settled in other Reformed Churches as it is in ours, the Reformation had made a much larger progress than now it has done." For Monsieur Rogne, the French Ambassador, said, at the time of the Conference at Hampton Court, "That if the other Reformed Churches had kept the same orders amongst them that we have, he was assured there would have been many thousands of Protestants more than now there are."

Furthermore, there is very great reason to believe that *Episcopacy would have been established* in all the Reformed Churches, if the artifices of the Papists had not hindered it. Of this we have a singular proof. It appears from a *Memorandum* taken out of Sir Henry Sidney's book, called the *Romish Policies*, Num. 6, page

37, in folio (a manuscript belonging to Archbishop Ussher), that this noble person, who was in great favour with Queen Elizabeth, and in her reign was Knight of the Garter, and besides other preferments was twice advanced to be Deputy of Ireland, had, amongst other of his discourses (most of which continue still in manuscript), these words :—"Her Royal Highness giving me the freedom to search the affairs of State ever since Her Royal Father's denying the jurisdiction of the See of Rome; among others of this sort, I found a letter directed to the Bishops of Winchester and Rochester; part of the contents being to my purpose, be these, as they are translated out of the Low-Dutch :

"Edward (Son of Henry, the heretic king of England), by his crafty and politic Council, hath absolutely brought in heresy, which if not by art or other endeavours be speedily overthrown and made infamous, all other foreign heretics will unite with your new heresies now amongst yourselves lately planted, *and so have Bishops as you have*; and it is the opinion of our learned men now at Trent, that the schisms in England by Edward's Council established, *will reclaim all the Foreign sects into their Discipline, and thereby be one body united.*

"For Calvin, Bullinger, and others have written unto Edward to offer their service to assist and unite; also to make Edward and his heirs their chief Defender; *and so have Bishops as well as England*; which, if it came to pass that heretic Bishops be so

near, and spread abroad, *Rome and the clergy utterly falls*. You must, therefore, make these overtures of theirs odious to Edward and his Council. Receive N.S. and E.L. from Rotterdam, their lessons are taught them; take their parts if checked by the other heretics: for these be for *re-baptising, and not for Infant Baptism*. Their doctrine is for a future Monarchy on earth after death, which will please the ordinary kind well, and *dash the other that rageth now so among you*. Reverend Fathers, it is left to you to assist, (and to those you know are sure,) the Mother Church. From Delph, the 4th Ide of May, Anno Christi, 1549.—D.G.’

“Her Highness one day discoursing of matters of this kind, I told her of this Paper, at sight of which she was startled: the letter being amongst her sister’s papers, which caused her to express these very words, ‘I had rather than a year’s revenue that my brother Edward and his Council had seen this letter: Nay rather than twice my revenue, I had seen it sooner.’ And so caused me to lay it where I found it. The Council, upon her Highness’s discourse, concluded that *Calvin* would have established Episcopacy beyond seas, had he been consulted herein: and that the hindrance of this overture caused much animosity between Reformers”—*i.e.*, between those in England and those abroad.

Strype, in his *Life of Archbishop Parker*, thus alludes to this letter, and to what Archbishop Abbot wrote about it: “Perusing some letters of our predecessor

Matthew Parker, we find that *John Calvin and others of the Protestant Churches of Germany and elsewhere*, would have had Episcopacy, if permitted; but could not on several accounts, partly fearing the Princes of the Roman Catholic faith would have joined with the Emperor and the rest of the Popish Bishops to have depressed the same; partly being newly-reformed and not settled, they had not sufficient wealth to support Episcopacy, by reason of their daily persecutions. Another and a main course was they would not have any Popish hand laid over their Clergy. And whereas John Calvin had sent a letter, in King Edward the VI's time, to have conferred with the Clergy of England about some things to this effect, two Bishops, viz. Gardiner and Bonner, intercepted the same: whereby Mr. Calvin's overture perished. And he received an answer, *as if it had been from the Reformed Divines of those times*, wherein they check him, and slighted his proposals, from which time John Calvin and the Church of England were at variance on several points, which otherwise, through God's mercy, had been qualified if those papers of his proposals had been discovered unto the Queen's Majesty during John Calvin's life. But, being not discovered until or about the sixth year of her Majesty's reign, her Majesty much lamented they were not found sooner."

From this letter it is very evident, that the establishment of Episcopacy in other Reformed Churches, was prevented purely by the artifices of the Papists. And, moreover, it is a proof that Calvin did not regard

the form of government he had been obliged to resort to, as a permanent measure. But that he and the other Reformers in Germany and elsewhere, looked forward to the time when they would be able to obtain the Episcopacy, as a surer means of securing peace and order among themselves, unity with the rest of Christendom, and as being more in accordance with the will and design of Christ.

That those first Reformers were very willing and desirous to have Episcopacy established among them, is evident also from several other testimonies besides this already mentioned. You will remember that in mentioning the Confession of Augsburg, your attention was drawn to this, that the subscribers to it expressed "their great desire to observe the Ecclesiastical Polity in all degrees, as it is canonical in the Church; and to reverence the authority of Bishops, provided they do not force us to anything contrary to God's Word." And in addition to other instances then adduced, we may notice that Melancthon, in a letter to Luther, also says: "You will not believe how I am hated of the Noricians and others; it is not well that men should abhor the restoration of Bishops. For I know not with what face we can refuse them, if they will let us have purity of doctrine. And I do fear that Episcopal authority being dissolved, *we shall have more tyranny in the place of it.*" Also, in another letter of his, written to a certain person, he says:—"Luther did always judge as I do, who knew himself to be more liked by some men, because by his means Bishops had been cast out, and themselves set at liberty,

which will be dangerous to posterity. For what state of the Church shall we have, when the ancient Polity being shook off, there shall be no certain rulers."

This solid judgment of Melancthon is praised by Cameraries, in his *History of the Augsburg Confession*, (p. 392) where he says: "That he endeavoured *the restoration of Bishops*, if they would permit the use of sound doctrine, notwithstanding that he was violently opposed by many; but that Luther, not only stood by him in this matter, but also put him upon it."

Brett, in referring to the Discourse on Episcopacy by the Author of the *Snake in the Grass*, (p. 93), says also, "*Calvin and Beza*, and the rest of the learned Reformers on their part, *did also give their testimony for the Episcopacy as much as any*. They counted it a most unjust reproach upon them, *to think that they condemned Episcopacy*; which they say they did not throw off, but could not have it at Geneva, without coming under the Papal Hierarchy. And on the other hand, they highly applauded and congratulated the Episcopal Hierarchy of England, in their several letters to Queen Elizabeth, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others of our English Bishops. *They prayed heartily to God for the continuance and preservation of it; bemoaning their own unhappy circumstances, that they could not have the like*, because they had no Magistrate to protect them. They wished for Episcopacy in their Churches, the *want of which they owned as a great defect*, but called it *their misfortune* rather than their fault, as the learned French Huguenots have likewise pleaded on their own behalf.

“If they will give us such an Hierarchy (says Calvin) in which the Bishops shall so excel, as that they refuse not to be subject to Christ, and to depend upon Him as their only Head, and to refer all to Him; then will I confess, that *they are worthy of all Anathema*, if any such shall be found, *who will not reverence, and submit themselves to it with all obedience.*” (De necessitat. Eccl. Reformand.)

“*If there be any* (says Beza) which you shall hardly persuade me to believe, *who reject the whole Order of Episcopacy, God forbid that any man in his wits should assent to the madness of such men.*” And speaking particularly of the Church of England, and her Archbishops and Bishops, he says, “He never meant to oppugne anything of that; but calls it a *singular blessing of God*, and wishes that she may enjoy it for ever.” (De Minist. Ev. Grad. C. I & XXVIII.)

But it will be asked, Did not Calvin condemn Episcopacy at Geneva, and set up something like Presbyterianism instead? Yes, we answer. And did not Beza strenuously oppose the rule of Bishops, and mightily prefer a kind of Presbyterian Government instead? Yes. And did he not write to Knox, who was himself a disciple of Calvin's, to put down Episcopacy in Scotland, and stoutly uphold the system of Presbyterianism which had been adopted at Geneva? Yes. And did not Knox himself cry out against the Bishops as one of the abominations of the Papacy, so much so that the people thought Prelacy and Papacy were reprobated in the same breath, and that one was as bad as the other?

Yes, we cannot deny these things. But there is a simple and sufficient answer to all these questions; when we state that it was only in those cases where the Episcopate had become subject to the Papacy, and where they wanted to force or dragoon the people to accept the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome, which they could not receive, or believe to be agreeable to the Word of God. It was in such cases, where the Bishops had parted with the essential rights of their sacred office and become agents of the Papacy, *and not otherwise*. This any sensible man must see from the above letters and observations of Calvin, Beza, and others, who were really in favour of the Episcopacy when properly exercised in accordance with the Apostolical rule.

Even Knox himself towards the close of his life had not a word to say against the establishment of the Episcopacy after this sort, and as it was exercised in England. He was a vehement opposer of the Papacy, but he was much exercised in his mind also about the independency and license of the ministers associated with him, who wanted to have their own way, and did not like to submit to any rule but their own; and had, in the superintendents of ministers, introduced into the Presbyterian system a rule something analogous to the Episcopacy; to preserve some degree of unity and order among them. In Knox's First Book of Discipline, you have mention made of *the twelve Superintendents* that had been appointed. At the same time also he endeavoured to keep up a friendly feeling with the Bishops in England, for in the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland,

held 1566, they did not hesitate to send an affectionate letter, drawn up by Knox "*to their Brethren, the Bishops and Pastors of England,*" requesting them to deal gently with those of their number who objected to the use of the canonical habits, but not absolutely denying the lawfulness of the said apparel. (Spottiswoode, pp. 198, 199.)

In the General Assembly of the Scotch Kirk at Leith, A.D., 1572, Episcopacy was restored, and the outward polity of the Church was ordained to be the same as before the Reformation, but freed from the domination of the Papacy and its errors. Nor did Knox object to it, but rather gave his sanction to it, though from his infirmities, he was not able to attend. There can be no doubt that he was far from satisfied with the constitution he was the means of imposing upon the Church of Scotland of which he was the founder, and willingly acquiesced in a return to the ancient regimen or government of the Church. There is a letter extant, written by him to the next General Assembly which met at Perth in the beginning of August following, in which we find him distinctly expressing his acquiescence in, or submission to, the arrangements recently made at Leith, and that even before they had received the sanction of the Assembly, then convened. He requests the Assembly, which he was in too weak a state of health to attend in person, to make suit to the Regent, among other things, that "no gift of any Bishopric or other Benefice be given to any person contrary to the tenor of the Acts made in the time of the first Regent of

good memory (Murray), and they that are contrar the said Acts, or to any unqualified person, may be revoked and made null be (by) an Act of secret Council; and that all Bishoprics so vakand may be presented, and qualified persons nominat thereunto within a year after the vaking thereof, according to the Order taken in Leith be (by) the Commissioners of the nobility and of the Kirk, in the month of January last." (See the Paper published from Calderwood's MS. History in Appendix, No. 38, to Robertson's Hist. of Scotland.)

The present system of Presbyterian government in Scotland, then, did not originate with Knox, but with Andrew Melville, who was assisted by his nephew James, and a few other aspiring individuals, after the death of Knox. Andrew Melville had gone to Geneva, taught in the Academy there, and imbibed while a young man the notions of a later generation of Presbyterians, who had lost sight of, or were ignorant of the ancient, Apostolic order of the Church, and thought that their own system was not only right, but the only right system; and opposed the Episcopacy with bitter animosity. In 1574 he returned to Scotland with a good reputation for learning, and was through the interest of the Bishop of Glasgow appointed Principal of the University there. The gentle-minded Bishop little knew what a viper he had promoted, or brought as it were into his Diocese, who would in after years attack him personally, and oust him out of his sacred office. Andrew did not at first disclose his sentiments, but he was not thirty years old, when he proposed his new Scheme of

Presbyterianism to an Assembly, 1575. He is spoken of as "rash and imperious, a keen republican, sarcastic and severe in his judgment of others, and with little command of temper." To bring about the reception of his own views, in concert with Drury, a minister of Edinburgh, he attacked the doctrine of Episcopacy with vehemency, and no little ability. And it is no less certain, that he speedily gained not only a hearing against the existing state of things, but strongly persuaded the people and their ministers to a dislike of the Episcopacy, and to desire the scheme of Presbyterianism which he had proposed. There was not much difficulty in this, because it would give to the people and the pastors themselves the rule over the Church, and depose those who had authority over them. And of course, without considering whether it was right or wrong, in accordance with the Apostolic rule or not, they were willing and desirous to adopt measures to exalt themselves, and take the reins of government into their own hands. They loved to have it so; and accordingly, without now entering into the course of events, the Episcopacy, or any approach to it, —as the having superintendents over ministers—was abolished, and a new kind of Presbyterianism was substituted in its place. But it bears upon it the stamp of having come from *below*—from the people and their ministers, who ought to be under rule; and not from *above*, from the authority which Christ gave to His Apostles, and they to the Bishops who succeeded them in the government of His Church. And it is to this

Melvillian scheme of Presbyterianism in Scotland, that the large number of Presbyterian bodies which now exist, can trace their origin.

To come back to our starting point, then, if the true principles of the Reformation were better understood at the present day, there would not be that hindrance, but a more general desire and endeavour, to return to the ancient basis of unity. The religion of the early Reformers abroad, as well as of those in England was not bare Protestantism—which is a negative kind of religion, but it was of a more positive, definite, and substantial character. While they protested with all their might against the errors and abuses of the Papacy, and would have nothing to do with them, they steadily aimed at a return to Primitive Christianity, as more fully expressed and guarded by the first four, or even six General Councils of the Church. This, as we have mainly contended for in the former volume, is not only the true basis of unity for *all* Christians, but the one designed for us by Christ and His Apostles, and the only one whereby all true believers can fulfil the will and earnest prayer of our Lord, that *they may be one*, and in such manner that the world, witnessing this unity, may also believe that the Father hath sent His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of the world.

And though this purpose or design of the first Reformers abroad was, as we know, thwarted and obstructed by the crafty policy, and the resolute, continued, implacable opposition of the Papacy, so that it could not at the time be carried out; yet they did

not desire to leave the Church; it was not their mind to create divisions; but circumstances were against them. And, making what provision they could for the time they still maintained their principles; and manifesting as best they could the Primitive Christianity they aimed at; they continued hoping, striving, and praying most earnestly for the Reformation of the Church: never losing sight of the bond of unity for all Christendom, trusting that under altered circumstances they might return into the bosom of the Church purified from her corruptions; or that the ancient policy and government of the Church would have been, by some means, set up among them; and then helping their National Churches to throw off the yoke of the Papacy, as in England, they in their several countries would have become a united body of Christians in the Church, and done away with the divisions which had been caused. They would after a time have returned to the unity of the Church, as doves to their windows, or, as a ship driven out of its course by stress of weather, would, as soon as possible after the storm, have been directed again towards the destination originally intended. Those who steered the vessel would have kept to their purpose, and not been diverted from it.

Though the Church of England had, through providential circumstances, been able to throw off the bondage and errors of the Papacy, and still retain the Episcopacy reformed after the faith and model of the Primitive Church, it was only effected after a severe and lengthened struggle, and after she had been much

crippled by divisions fostered by her foes, and by those “merciless devourers of the Church patrimony,” as Knox called them, who professed to, and indeed did for their own sake, help forward its Reformation. Those who first reformed the Church of England might not be in every respect blameless, nor the work they did altogether perfect: but considering the difficulties they had to contend against, they were noble-hearted men, and effected a glorious and blessed restoration: for which we should be devoutly thankful. And who of their accusers would have done better, or half as well?

And if Luther and Melancthon, and even Calvin and Knox, would in their own countries have gladly welcomed such a Reformation of the Church, as the Church of England possessed, (however they might have differed from her on minor points,) because she had purified her faith, according to the simplicity of the Gospel, and as held by the Catholic Church in her purer days—surely those in this country who cannot pretend to have the learning, zeal, and foresight of these Reformers, but are still true Protestants as they were, and imbued with a like spirit, should be the more inclined to shun these miserable divisions and contentions that now abound, and so disgrace and injure our Christianity, and be ready to return to such a basis of unity as the Church of England affords them.

Such should indeed be the mind of those who are real Protestants and would be true followers of the first Reformers. For not only does the Church of

England take the right line of defence against the Papacy—as they did, for she is one with them in this matter—but she keeps strictly to the original basis of Christian unity, as they desired to do, in following the example and pattern of the Primitive and ancient Catholic Church; which sought and strove *to be one* according to the Apostolic rule, as well as to be free from corruption, that they might the better fulfil their Lord's will and design. But alas, there are many in these days, as at the time of the Rebellion, that do *protest* too much; and scruple not to speak in opprobrious terms of what is most sacred, what is most reverently done, and in accordance with Primitive Christianity.

III.—But besides this want of a better understanding of the principle of the Reformation, there are other forces at work that still prevent a return to unity, that we must glance at. The able divine, George Hickes, notices several principal causes of division in his ‘*Apologetical Vindication* ;’ and among them he mentions this—*men trusting in their own private judgement, without having respect to the old paths, or established authority* ; men who are so wise in their own conceit, that they think they know what is right and true, better than the ancient Christians in their best and purest days, after they had been taught by the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, as to what the means were for truly following the will of Christ. These are they that “dispise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.” “These are murmurers and complainers, walking after

their own lusts." Tertullian speaks of such in his days as being the authors of heresy and schism, and keeping them up. They loved to exercise the whole lust of their curiosity about doubtful and obscure things. Their curiosity was above their Faith. They searched the Scriptures to find out new doctrines and opinions; and, if they could not find them there, they were sure to bring them there, though never heard of before, and never so contrary to the unanimous tradition of all the Apostolic Churches. "Doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such," saith the Apostle, "withdraw thyself."

IV.—Another hindrance to the Unity of Christians named, is that of *men desiring to be rulers, or to be regarded as great men in some way, envious, discontented, and ambitious*. "The desire of ruling is the mother of heresies," says Theophylact on Gal. V. And saith another ancient writer, From an affection for governing, and getting above others, which are two domineering passions, I think heresies mostly arise: for those who do not like to be in the rank of subjects, sow new doctrines, that they may be chiefs of a new sect. And, indeed, this was the temper of Simon Magus, the first heretic and false Apostle. He affected to be a great man, and to have the people from the least to the greatest give heed unto him, as the great power of God. Yet was he in the very "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

V.—But that which Hickes puts foremost in fomenting divisions and dissensions, is in *men being ignorant of the Scriptures, and whose ignorance makes them over confident*. Yet how can this be, when copies of the Scriptures are so multiplied, so easily to be had, and the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures so abundant? I think this may be answered by a very suitable illustration taken from Archer Butler, where he says: “Scripture holds a bright lamp at the head of a strait and narrow path, which shines clearly down the whole; but if we rush aside into the thickets, we must expect only broken reflections and scattered gleams.” So then *if we go out of the way* on the one side, or the other into the thicket, we must not expect to have the full view of the light of truth as a whole, which those have who abide by the teaching in the Church as it has come down from the beginning, in a straight path from the Apostles and first preachers, who wrote the Scriptures; we can only expect to get an obscure view of the light, if not a distorted or imperfect view of the truth.

The fault is not in the Scriptures, but in those who read them, or the manner, or object they have in reading them. The ancient Fathers were ever most anxious for the free and common use of the Scriptures, and that they should be read by every man “in his own tongue,” but still we know how much they are abused and “wrested,” as St. Peter says, by men, “to their own destruction.” And the Romanists, who have themselves erred in this

respect, think to cure the evil by hiding the light, and discouraging the reading of the Bible by the people in their mother tongue. But it is not the Scriptures that are to blame, but the way in which they are used to support all kinds of false doctrine, heresy, and schism, whereby men are not only drawn away, but hindered, from embracing the Scriptural basis of true Christian unity.

Tertullian says (De Præscript Hæret § 39) "That the Scriptures are so contrived by the will of God, that they should afford occasion for heresies, because I read that there must be heresies; and heresies cannot be without the Scriptures." The end being, as St. Paul adds, "That they which are approved may be made manifest among you." God, in His great wisdom, intended the Scriptures for the common rule or canon of the ancient faith; and that all doctrines or conceptions should be tried by those Scriptures, and not that those Scriptures should be tried by the private conceptions and new doctrines of men, and its words bent to suit them. For those Scriptures are ever to remain a precious standard of our Faith in Christ, and a safeguard to God's believing people in every age, when men of curious, or ambitious, or over-zealous minds, would twist the Scriptures against the common consent of Antiquity, to suit their own pretentious notions or designs, to the hurt of themselves and others.

VI.—And this touches upon the last hindrance to Christian Unity to be noticed, and that is, *the wrong*

impressions whereby men are misled, as regards Scriptural truth and the Church, in those very points wherein men differ and cause divisions. Some examples of this may be given, confined to the notion that Presbyterianism is of equal authority in the government of the Church as the Episcopate. Reference will be made to the words of certain well known authors, some of whose writings are regarded, and justly so, as standard works, from the ability and learning displayed, and of which in other points we have availed ourselves, but who have been led to propagate erroneous views on the points alluded to above, against formerly settled opinions, and an almost over-powering weight of evidence.

Thus, for instance, the learned Church historian, Mosheim—brought up in the third or fourth generation of the Reformed communities abroad, which had become accustomed to a certain kind of Presbyterian or Congregational government, because they were unable to obtain the Episcopate while the Episcopate of their several countries was enslaved by the domination of the Papacy, and who desired to gain a greater credence and standing for the position they were compelled to take, and which by the early Reformers had been regarded as a temporary provision—endeavoured to make their systems appear as valid and Scriptural, and such as the early Christians had established among themselves. Mosheim, being one of the most learned and foremost men of his day, composed his well-known and valuable work on Ecclesiastical History, which is fre-

quently used and referred to by those training for the ministry in various bodies ; and in the early part of his history intimates that Christ and his Apostles gave no clear instructions as *to the form* in which the Church was to be governed, and that it was left in some measure to be accommodated to the times in which it existed, and to the wisdom and prudence of the chief rulers both of the Church and State. He insinuates that the *people* were first in authority, that the form of government and the laws enjoined depended upon them ; then he endeavours to prove in this work, and in his otherwise able "Commentaries," that all ministers are *equal*, and that Christ and His Apostles gave no instructions whereby *any distinction* should be made among them ; and this he attempts to prove, by showing that the titles of *Presbyter* and *Bishop* are used of the same order of men in the New Testament.

The conclusion to which he comes, is however, so much against the abundance of evidence to the contrary, that the whole question will shortly be considered at length, and it may here suffice to ask, Did not Christ before He left give Divine authority with "all power" in regard to His Church, to a small body only—His Apostles ? And did not this authority include the Episcopacy which they undoubtedly exercised in the Church whilst they were alive ? And did not the Apostles before the end of their ministry, commit the same authority to faithful men also, who should still carry on the work of governing the Church ? On the other hand, where is the proof that Christ gave the like authority to other

ministers, as, for instance, to the Seventy whom He had chosen? Should it not then be clearly apparent to all sensible, thinking Christians, that Christ and His Apostles did design that the *ministers* in His Church should not all be equal, but that a few should govern, while the majority of ministers and the whole of the laity should be subject to and guided by them? And is it not sufficiently clear, also, that the people were not to be the first in authority; far from it, though their counsel and help were ever to be had; and that neither the government of the Church, nor its laws and canons, were to depend upon them, or the changeable judgment that from time to time they might entertain? Moreover, is it not strange that all Christians from the beginning should have been ignorant of these things; and that they should only just be discovered in the Sixteenth Century? But the truth of these notions can be thoroughly tested. These are broad, strong, deep considerations, that go to the root of the matters in dispute, and should lead us to a better understanding of Scripture truth. In the meanwhile, let those who wish to see the erroneous views of Mosheim on the Church of the first century controverted, read Appendix I., attached at the end, to the English translation of his *History*, by Dr. Maclaine.

Gieselier's *Ecclesiastical History* is another valuable work, which bristles with authorities, and references to other writings—a work which is much used in the training of ministers in Dissenting Academies and Colleges. Gieselier, in the earlier part of his work, follows much

the same views as entertained by Mosheim. In volume I., pages 88 and 89, he says, "The new Churches out of Palestine formed themselves after the pattern of the Mother Church in Jerusalem." This is doubtless true, but he goes on to say, "Their Presidents were the *Elders* (πρεσβύτεροι, ἐπίσκοποι), *officially* of equal rank, although in many Churches, individuals among them had a *personal* authority over the others." There is, I am afraid, purposely a jumble in the meaning. Does he mean that there were none in those early days of the Church, who had *official* authority over other ministers, or that those who exercised authority had only a *personal* influence over those who were guided by them, and that the one was equal in rank to the other class? If so, what he states is contrary to the evidence drawn from Scripture, as well as from early Ecclesiastical history.

We shall have to deal shortly with the Scripture testimony on this matter; but it may be well to allude here, to the most important evidence, a single passage, which he brings from the Fathers to support his statement, or what he would imply, because this Father is one of those lower down in the stream of time from the Apostles, than those we purpose to quote from, and consequently not of that value, as when we bring testimony from those nearer to the Apostles. Now Gieselier quotes St. Jerome to prove that this Father thought that the *Presbuteroi* and the *Episcopoi* were equal in rank. But first of all, how shall we reconcile this with other passages, where Jerome distinctly states the two to be of

of different rank? Thus St. Jerome himself, for instance, the pretended patron of the *Presbyterians*, in the conclusion of his letter to *Evagrius*, writes as follows:—"That all Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, and do now supply their places." And, "What *Aaron* and his *Sons*, and the *Levites* did in the Temple, this the *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, claim to themselves in the Church: that we may know that the Apostolical traditions were taken from the Old Testament." And that "the safety of the Church depends on the dignity of the Chief Priest (or Presbyters if you will have it so), to whom, if a greater and more eminent power were not given, there would be as many schisms as Priests." Again, St. Jerome says, "Through all the world it was decreed that for the avoiding of schisms, and contentions, one should be chosen out of the Presbyters and set over the rest." This passage is quoted by Chillingworth, the great champion of the Protestants against the Papists; who is nevertheless stoutly in favour of the Bishops being divinely appointed to govern the Church, so as to prevent divisions. Jerome also testifies in Titus I. "That the original reason of constituting one over the rest of Presbyters, to whom all the care of the Church should belong, was so decreed through the whole world, that schism might be removed." And again (*Adver. Lucifer*) "Bishops are not only a law unto themselves, but unto Presbyters also."

Now Gieselier must have had a very poor acquaintance with the writings of St. Jerome, or he purposely kept back the truth, to support his views, which is not

very creditable to a learned man. It is an artifice, too, frequently adopted by the Papists, but unworthy of a true Protestant, and very damaging to any cause, when the imposition is discovered. And it leads us to ask, must there not be some other meaning to this rather obscure and involved passage from Jerome, which is produced in support of the Presbyterian theory, and advanced not only by Gieselier, but by others, than that which they make out? Certainly, and it has been frequently explained. The best answer, however, is that, I think, given by Hooker in his celebrated *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

The passages would take up too much space to repeat here, but will be found in Book VII., Chap. V., and is well worth reading carefully over. Hooker begins by saying, "The drift and purport of St. Jerome's speech doth plainly shew what his meaning is." And further on in his argument he contends, "that St. Jerome's admonition is reasonable, sensible, and plain, being contrived to this effect,—that the ruling superiority of one Bishop over many Presbyters in each Church, is an Order descended from Christ to the Apostles, who were themselves Bishops at large; and from the Apostles to those whom they in their stead appointed Bishops over particular countries and cities; and even from those ancient times universally established; thus many years it hath continued throughout the world; for which cause Presbyters must not grudge to continue subject unto their Bishops, unless they will proudly oppose themselves against that *which God*

Himself ordained by His Apostles, and the whole Church of Christ approveth and judgeth most convenient." Concluding with these words:—"Wherefore let us not fear to be herein bold and peremptory, that if anything in the Church's government, surely the first institution of Bishops was from heaven, was even of God; the Holy Ghost was the Author of it."

Gieselier then goes on to support his erroneous statement that Bishops and Presbyters are equal by adducing passages from various *Roman Catholic* writers, of later date, and brings in the views expressed regarding the two orders in the Council of Trent. And there, and from such authorities, we doubt not, but that he will find some support for what he says, for *it is*, and *was*, the policy of Rome to depreciate or lower the rank of Bishops, so as to make them little better than Presbyters, in order to exalt and establish the *Papacy*. So that herein these Nonconformists are at one with the Romanists; but not so with the Primitive Christians, or the early Reformers.

On pages 170 and 171, this passage occurs in Gieselier's work: "The idea, however, of a universal Christian priesthood was still maintained. The influence of the Bishop necessarily increased when *Synods* began to be common, at which the Bishop chiefly represented his congregation (*παροικία*), although the Presbyters also had a voice along with him. All congregations were independent of one another, although some had a peculiar reputation more than others." What does this writer mean? He seems to be drawing his picture

of the early Church from that of Presbyterian Assemblies or from Congregational Unions of his own day, for it is utterly at variance with the records of Antiquity. For if he had referred to his Bingham—and he evidently had one, for he often quotes him on other matters—he would have found that he was not correct in point of fact respecting any of the ancient Synods, either Diocesan, Provincial, National, or Œcumenical. It is not true that in any of them the Bishop “chiefly represented his Congregation.” He had the oversight of numerous Congregations and Presbyters, although in some cases, certain chosen Presbyters, who had charge of congregations, assisted him with their counsel, and had sometimes a voice along with him. And though “all congregations were” in one sense, independent of one another, none were independent of the Bishop, but along with their ministers, were subject to his authority.

Gieselier seems to have been led into misunderstanding or misrepresenting the meaning of the word *Parochia* (παροικία), for during the first centuries of the Christian era, it had a much more extensive signification than that of a Congregation, or Parish, such as we have in England at the present day. It usually designated the Diocese. And if the author had again looked into Bingham, he would have avoided falling into the gross and flagrant errors he has done, though he might wish to advocate and strengthen the position of the religious community to which he was attached. On turning to Bingham, in the Index of

matter to his voluminous work, there is plainly written "*Parochia*. The ancient name of a Diocese:" and reference is made to Book IX., chap. II., sec. I. where, after stating that it marked the boundary of the Bishop's jurisdiction, these words occur: "That thus it was, appears evidently from this, that the largest Dioceses, such as those of *Rome*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, which had many particular Churches in them, were called by the same name, as the reader may find in an hundred passages in Eusebius." Instances of which are given for reference.

Whether such erroneous statements are made wilfully for a purpose, or in ignorance, they are very misleading to other writers or teachers of men of lesser note or learning; and when such teaching gets widely spread about, no wonder that wrong impressions get fixed in men's minds, and engender as well as foster strife and divisions among Christians, who should be of one mind in the Household of Christ. Even some people in the Church are affected by them, and think that there may be some truth in what is thus said, and begin to think that they are matters of indifference, and that there is some doubt or uncertainty about them: when there should not be, and need not be. Thus even some Clergymen and Dignitaries of the Church come to entertain loose notions on these points.

Dean Waddington wrote an excellent "History of the Church," for the most part, though under the auspices of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful

Knowledge: a body which cannot be accused of friendliness to the Church of England. He was, it has been said, "an elegant and polished writer," and no one can read this work without feeling that he was, in general, a learned man. But one is surprised to read such a passage as this in the first part of Chapter XIII, relative to the Ante-Nicene Church: "These (the Primitive Assemblies of Christians,) were scattered, as the religion spread itself, in perfect equality and independence, and their affairs were, for the most part, regulated by a body of Presbyters, who acted with the consent of the people, and under the guidance of the Apostles." Now the meaning conveyed to the ordinary reader is that the government of the Church was at first in the hands of Presbyters, who were dependent only on the will of the people, and the only saving clause is, that they "were under the guidance of the Apostles;" but that, when they were gone the new converts were left to do much as they liked, "since (as the Historian continues) Christ Himself had not laid down any general rules of ecclesiastical polity; and since his Apostles were more intent on enlarging the numbers of the believers and in forming their piety, than on constructing partial laws for the external constitution of a Society, which was destined to comprehend every race and variety of man." And thus the reader is left to infer that there was no authority exercised over the first assemblies; no regulations laid down for the guidance of the Church, no order established, no settled Constitution formed.

In the next paragraph, however, he seems compelled to make exceptions, and eventually to admit that before the death of the remaining Apostle, *the Episcopacy* was almost universally established; and yet, in the succeeding paragraph he comes to the strangest and most confusing conclusion of all; for the author says:—"Thus, in the unsettled Constitution of the Primitive Church, we may observe the elements of *three forms of government* subsisting under Apostolic direction: the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent." In a note he adds, "Perhaps we might say even four, at least, who maintain the sufficiency of occasional and spontaneous exhortation of any zealous member of any congregation for spiritual instruction, also their authority in the partial and transient practice of the Primitive Church." Does the writer mean by this that the elements or embryo of all these forms of *governments* were at one and the same time in existence and sanctioned by the Apostles, as if they had not yet made up their minds to any one definite form; and that the Primitive Church was left in doubt,—left to contend and struggle for it, as to which should be the strongest and bear rule? If so, is it not only contrary to historical truth, but opposed to the broad, clear enough testimony of Scripture? He certainly attempts to stand well with different forms of government, and make it "comfortable all round:" to those who are split up into divisions, but is it not at the sacrifice of truth, unity, and concord? for does he not make it out that the Apostles left behind them in

the Church the *elements* of confusion, strife, and schism? and that we have not them to thank, under Christ, for giving us a sufficiently settled Constitution and form of government, whereby peace, order, and unity might be secured among all those who were obedient to the Faith? And yet St. Paul tells us, that “God is not the author of confusion but of peace, *as in all Churches of the saints.*” (1 Cor. xiii. 33.)

If, however, the author meant that under the one only government—which the Apostles established and designed *for all Christians*, and for all generations, as the words of Scripture assuredly intimate, the *employment of Presbyters* was to be a large element in the ministry, and made use of in taking the oversight, or it may be termed, the Episcopacy of the *several congregations* of Christians; and was also so constructed that the different Churches and Bishops,—not congregations and Presbyters—should be independent of one another, though subject to the united council of the whole, and to the general laws laid down for all the Churches of the Saints from the beginning—which seems to be a true state of the case; then the passage is most involved and misleading.

These are but examples of what may be found in other publications; so that people must not take all that is printed in a book for granted; and in these latter days men should be especially on their guard against what they receive as true, for there are not a few authors that could be mentioned, who have obtained a great name by their writings, who

inculcate most dangerous sentiments, in a most specious manner, undermining the foundation of our holy Faith, and fostering Infidelity in various degrees and ways. And it is in these erroneous statements, and in those that carry with them a vague and equivocal meaning, with reference to the founding of the Church, that so much harm is done, and is mainly the cause, even at the present time, of the bitter contentions and divisions that exist among Christians. In short, it is these *wrong impressions* that are spread abroad among us that are among the things that chiefly hinder our return to the true basis of Christian Unity.

It is, therefore, of the utmost moment, that those who are Teachers, or who are preparing to be Teachers of others, among the Nonconformists, in the Roman Communion, and in the Church of England as well, should consider *once more* carefully, seriously, and prayerfully—in view of coming to some more fixed and definite agreement as to *the basis of true Christian Unity*—these several points: the source, the beginnings, and the authority of the Christian Religion, the object and the design of its Founder, how the Church was constructed by the Apostles and first Teachers of the Gospel, what was the constitution, or lines on which it was clearly laid down, and as it was received by the Primitive Christians, so far as it can be discerned from their writings.

It is not enough to know a few passages of Scripture, or some arguments that seem to favour any particular opinion; we must endeavour to gain a

view of the mass and weight of evidence in one compass, that establishes the Basis of Unity, as it is marked out at large in the New Testament, and as it was almost universally received in the early ages of the Church ; and then, thoughtfully and with the aid of God's grace, we shall be in a position to form an unbiased judgment, and order our steps aright according to God's most holy ordinance.

And as for this, so can also the Laity, belonging to all the various denominations. For the great majority of them, who with an honest and good heart seek the Truth, and want to find the right way, are now fully able to come to some understanding upon those momentous questions, which concern the Unity of Christendom ; only let them have the evidence in full, clearly, and truthfully put before them, as it has come down in a continuous stream from the beginning of Christianity, and so that they may test the certainty thereof. They are well able to judge and decide for themselves what is right and true, and to what they should cleave as such, as men capable of determining in the main what they should receive, and believe, and do. For there is a plainness and truthfulness afforded us in the Scriptures, and in the writing of the Primitive Christians, that will commend itself assuredly to the common understanding ; so that "a wayfaring man, though a fool," as some may account him, "shall not err therein."

And to this evidence we now purpose to address ourselves more fully.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST.

Two things will be taken for granted, I think, for the most part, by all differing communions of Christians. First, that it was the Will and Design of Christ to found a distinct Religious Society of His own, or body of His followers for all ages—separated in some definite sense and visible manner from the rest of the world; and different in some essential points from the Jewish Religion which foreshadowed it, and was in some degree typical of it;—for Christ plainly in the earlier part of His ministry, said, “I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (St. Matt. xvi. 18.) This was then in the future. And it is perfectly clear that from this time, He must have had this purpose constantly before His mind; and that in His public teaching, and more especially in the instructions He gave to His chosen disciples, He must have frequently referred to it, and prepared their minds for it. This might naturally be expected.

And secondly, it cannot be denied that there was one thing among others Christ was particularly anxious about, and that was, the *Unity* of this His mystical body. This formed, as will be remembered, part of that last fervent prayer, just before He was about to offer Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins; and therefore has a special claim upon our attention: for He supplicated

God His Father most earnestly, that all those who believed on Him *might be one*; and this after a most perfect pattern, "That they all may be ONE; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee;" and again: "That they may be ONE, even as we are ONE:" and, "That they may be made perfect in ONE." And, moreover, that it was to be a visible, outward union, as well as spiritual and invisible, it was to be real; so "that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me; and," again emphasizing the point, He says, "that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me." (St. John xvii. 20-24.) He had, however, as we shall find, often spoken to them about this Unity, and endeavoured to enforce upon them the necessity of it, especially in the Parables of the Vine, the Net, the Field, and the Good Shepherd; so that it did not come before them then for the first time.

Now, though these two points are generally admitted—the Society and its Unity—since they are so clearly made known to us in the Holy Gospels; yet, at the very onset, we are met with the strange assertion that Christ left no instructions about the building of His Church, or the form of its government, so that order and unity might be preserved—that the Apostles formulated no plans, laid down no Constitution for the Church, but left it to the devices of its future leaders, to be changed and altered as they liked from time to time, according to what was most popular. And with the intimation that the ruling power was in the

hands of the people, or body of members in any place—if any thing, and that all ministers were equal in power and dignity.

Now these opinions necessarily call for a few preliminary observations before proceeding with the positive matter before us. For they are evidently set forth to support the modern view of Christianity, in opposition to that which has come down from Christ and His Apostles, and what we find in the Primitive Church and for generations afterwards. It is a view, undoubtedly, in favour of such a kind of religious liberty as causes and fosters divisions and dissensions of all sorts, without any limit; and as they exist at the present time. On the very face of it there is something radically wrong, and plainly opposed in principle, as well as in its results, to the undeniable Will of Christ, and the preservation of the Unity which He so intensely desired should exist among all those who believe on Him, and love Him. For we can no more expect to bring peace and unity out of a system of confusion and discord, arising from every man following his own will and views, without any regard to lawful authority, than we can expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

But in contending against this false view put forward within the last three hundred years, about the character of Christ's Church, and alluded to towards the close of the last Chapter, we shall make use of two arguments. First, the *a priori* argument, that we might naturally have expected Christ to give some definite idea of the

nature and principles of the Religious Society He purposed to establish, and the lines on which it was to be constructed and governed, in order to attain and preserve the unity for which He prayed.

The second line of argument is that deducible from facts, or from the records of His own words and the means He adopted for accomplishing the gracious purpose that He had in view; and also from the proofs contained in the writings and Acts of the Apostles, as to what they thought about the matter, and the measures they took to carry out the will of Christ respecting His Church. All of which give strong, and we may say, almost overpowering evidence of there having been a design and plan respecting the Church, distinctly spread before the mind of Christ, sufficiently unfolded; and sufficiently understood by those whom He commissioned to carry out the great work, and even by those who sincerely desire to know His will and design.

This is the method taken by our Lord after His Resurrection, to convince some of His Apostles, who were at first slow of heart to believe that most astounding fact, on which the truth of the Gospel mainly rests, viz., that He was alive, after they had witnessed His death and sufferings. For after listening to their doubts awhile, He said, "*ought not* Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter His Glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (St. Luke xxiv. 26, 27.) And it is the same course that we intend to follow on the present occasion.

I.—And first, as to the *a priori* argument; we ask, *Ought not* Christ to have given some general idea—some sufficiently clear instructions about the building of His Church, and how it was to be governed, if He so ardently desired to preserve that unity for which He prayed, and that those who hereafter should believe on Him *might be One*? Certainly. No one can read the holy Gospels without feeling that the blessed Jesus was possessed of more than ordinary *insight* and *fore-sight*. He knew what was in man—his nature and tendency, that he was apt to fall and go wrong, and could not by himself always stand upright, and therefore needed constant control and direction. He knew the nature of things, and could see beforehand that unless some plain instructions were given, a way definitely marked out, and some persons especially assigned to watch over the interests of His Society, and the conduct and principles of the other officers and members, there would be much strife and schism; and that the very object for which He instituted such a body would otherwise be greatly frustrated.

And considering all this, I would ask, is it right to treat His words and actions, and to consider His instructions and ordinances, as those of one who acted without thought; and ordered certain things to be done, certain measures to be undertaken, without having any purpose or design in what He said or did? Is it becoming a Christian to think thus of the blessed Lord, who professes to believe on Him, to serve and love Him? Certainly not. Far rather should we think of

our Gracious Saviour, that He did and spake nothing without thought and great consideration: and that there was always a deep meaning and purpose in all He said, and in the instructions and orders that He gave. Far deeper and more profound, and more far reaching, having in view the saving welfare of many generations to come, than most people are apt to think. Let us at least, however, give the loving Saviour credit for speaking and acting as any sensible man would do: and then we shall not think so unworthily of Him, as that He left the Church to take care of itself, and that He gave no clear intimations of its purpose, made no provisions for its welfare.

It seems impossible, then, to believe—and I do not see by what subtilty of reasoning Christians can bring themselves to believe—that our Divine Lord left the building and formation of His Church to chance or hap-hazard, subject to the fancies or views and suggestions of first one and then another, who might become great and leading men, and who might be very zealous in preaching, and trying to convert souls to Christ: and that He considered it of so little importance how it was fashioned, that He would give no consideration or hardly any to the subject, take no care, make no provisions that it should be rightly formed and adapted for the end in view, in founding such a spiritual Society.

Such a supposition is not only unlikely and unreasonable, but so very derogative and disparaging to the wisdom of Christ, that one would put it from us as almost blasphemous. And it would appear to arise

either from some strong prejudices, misconceptions, or wilful ignorance of what Christ said or did. For see what such a supposition involves. Nothing less than this: that Christ was so inconsiderate, saw no necessity, and would not take the trouble—would be at less pains to show and explain what He proposed to build, or designed to have done in constructing His Church, than any common master or architect. Just think for a moment. Would any one, wanting to build a large house, of a peculiar structure, leave it to the labourers or chief workmen he should employ to lay the foundations or construct it as they liked, without giving them some definite idea about it—without any specific directions or working plan? and simply allow each, or a number of them, to do just as they pleased, so long only as they worked, and to take any course that suggested itself to their minds? Clearly not. We should think any such individual very foolish and unwise, and not likely to get what he wanted. Neither can we imagine Christ doing the like, even though we had no information or particulars given us, as to what He said or did.

We all know full well what a medley of a building would be raised, by just leaving things to take their course without giving due consideration and instructions beforehand. It might, however, be argued that no man should be treated as a mere machine, since individually he is capable of thought and of judging as to what was right; and therefore that every man should be at liberty to use his own private

judgment or idea, of what he considered right and proper. And so he is, to a certain extent, so long as he abides by the plan and specifications laid down, for he is expected to do his best in carrying them out; but if not, if he is bent upon carrying out some idea of his own which is not in keeping with the plan, he is corrected or discharged. For if such a course were allowed or pursued, whatever argument was used, the result would be fatal as to the unity of the building or its proper adaptation for which it was intended. It would not only be irregular and outwardly unseemly, but ill adapted internally for the purposes it was originally intended to fulfil.

The knowledge of this leads every one endowed with ordinary sense to be all the more particular in giving specific directions as to what he wants, to unfold as well as he can the idea in his mind; to have plans drawn out and details particularised; and further, he would take care that the plan and particulars be not afterwards altered by the workmen, to suit the whim of any of those employed in the building, but that the original design be strictly adhered to, both as regards the internal and external arrangements. And that any further enlargement of it, or future alteration or restoration should be entirely in accordance with it, so that the will and purpose of the master may be kept in view during the period of its existence.

And if men of common, practical sense will give great attention to this, and endeavour to describe

exactly what they want, and imbue those to whom they chiefly commit the building with the idea and plan in their own minds, so that it may be properly carried out; how can we conceive that our blessed Saviour should have been negligent or wanting in like thoughtfulness and care, in a matter of far greater moment—inconceivably greater, and which would necessarily require the greatest consideration?

True, a spiritual building must, of course, be essentially different from a temporal building, but none the less needful, nay, rather was it the more needful that those to whom Christ at the first entrusted the work should have their minds well imbued with the grand ideal of Christ's Church, His design and object in building it; and that they should receive all necessary instructions about the structure of it, and especially as to how the foundations were to be laid, and be able to give some clear directions to others employed to carry on the work. Christ's perfect mind, being in union with His divine nature, would perceive at one glance all that was wanted and necessary—and not through any laboured process such as most men have to undertake—so that the nature and constitution of the Church which He designed to build would be spread out clearly like a map or picture, in all its completeness and integrity; and be ever present to His mind. And can we not realize that He would be anxious and desirous to engraft in the minds of those master-builders whom He selected some notion of the character of the building, how they were to proceed,

and the several necessary arrangements for its structure?

And what can be a higher or more noble work and study than for Christ's believing people to search diligently for any intimations of His purpose in this respect? To contemplate it with gratitude, to mark and learn intimately what He says about it, to take it into their hearts and lives, to be guided by it, to conform themselves to it; this should be their great desire and aim, were it even ever so little that He had said to them about it, or had even ever so mysteriously given them information about it, as through Parables, for instance; so that only those who truly loved Him, and were desirous to obey Him, should know His will and understand it, while it should not be open to the eyes and understanding of those who were His enemies, and would turn it to evil purposes, or would not care to please Him.

For the circumstances under which Christ made known His will and design respecting the founding of His Church must not be overlooked; for He was in the midst of those who were on the watch to find some occasion to condemn Him; He spoke openly in the hearing of many who were seeking to lay hold of His words, that they might misrepresent them, that they might accuse Him to the chief priests and rulers; and even find some charge against Him, that they might bring down the judgment of Pontius Pilate, the governor, upon Him; which they eventually did, and thereby procured His death.

Moreover, there were few of His own followers even, that could understand at the first the *spiritual* character of His Kingdom; even His chosen Apostles up to the very last, thought that He was about to restore again the temporal kingdom of Israel. And if they could, to such an extent, mistake the meaning of our Lord's words, how easily might others have done so? And therefore our Saviour had to be on His guard, and could not, till the close of His life, and to the few He had specially chosen, speak more plainly, though He had all along in His teaching constantly referred to the nature and character of His Church.

For in the founding and establishing of His Kingdom it was not the design or will of Christ to overthrow or weaken the authority of the temporal powers, but rather to uphold them, to regard them as the power ordained of God for governing the affairs of the world, and keeping some order among men. Hence, while our blessed Lord would sufficiently make known His purposes respecting His Church, we must at the same time expect to find much that our Lord said about it, in a certain sense, obscurely given; while yet His faithful followers who wished to know His will and follow it, would seek to understand the deep meaning of all He said, which would, through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, all become plain and intelligible to them. They would delight in finding out His scheme, and feel it to be their duty to fully comprehend the plan He had devised for

them, that they might hereafter be kept together, according to His will, *as one body*. Thus they would fully enter into His design, and comply with it, as far, and as perfectly, as they could. And so it will be still.

Nor must we expect to find in the Scriptures that this Constitution of the Church, or the manner in which it was to be built then and throughout all generations, was unfolded immediately, in all its completeness, or made known in so many explicit terms. At first it came into existence like the bud in the rose of Sharon, and only as it grew did it develop itself, and display its fair proportions, and the unity and symmetry of its organisation, to be a joy, and beauty, and blessing for the whole world. First, the Apostles, and a few faithful ones were banded together, to form the nucleus of the new Society: then the gathering of the early members is recorded as received and acknowledged by the Apostles or those whom they appointed; and further, as the numbers rapidly increased, additional ministers were ordained to look after them, and teach them what to do: and lastly, as the Church still more largely extended herself, the appointment of rulers became necessary over different portions, to assist the Apostles, when individually they were not able personally to superintend the ministers appointed, and the several congregations they had under their charge.

But in all this great and momentous undertaking, especially in laying down the foundation, Christ from

the first appears to have provided, and looked forward to their having two means whereby they should be guided aright in what they did, and be enabled both to perceive and know what things they ought to do, in carrying out their Lord's instructions, and also have grace and power faithfully to carry out the design He had drawn out for them in the building of His Church.

First, he banded the Apostles together into a College, or central Council, after giving them a definite commission, with all authority, so that at the beginning, and at every fresh step they took, they might beforehand confer together, and consult and determine what should be done, that is, on all important measures, that thereby they might all be of one mind, and act alike in some uniform manner in carrying out, as they were best able, their Lord's purpose. And this at least seems to have continued until the foundations of the Church were regularly and adequately laid in Jerusalem, from which, as a model, all other branches or portions of the Church were to be fashioned. And that when they had to part from one another, to go severally on their way to preach the Gospel to all nations, according to their Lord's instructions, the same order of Church government might be observed and handed down to other generations, and be a connecting link established between all parts, so that the Church should everywhere be the same, and kept together as one vast Society or Body, belonging to the Lord, Who was ever to be its Head.

Secondly, the other means provided for guiding the Apostles aright, that they should not err, or make mistakes in building the Church, was the help of the Holy Spirit, just alluded to ; which Christ promised He would send unto them from the Father after His departure ; and which was, in a special manner and degree, poured out upon them. It is true that this promise of Christ still holds good to all faithful ministers and real Christians, but its primary application was to the Apostles in particular, and that, too, in respect of their founding the Church, giving to it a Constitution and setting things in order, according to the will of Christ.

This was manifest in the miraculous signs and wonders vouchsafed unto the Apostles on the coming upon them of the Holy Ghost, assuring them that they had the presence and help of a Divine guide, "giving them both the gifts of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations." Thus they had special gifts imparted to qualify them for their work, and an all-wise and supernatural Guide to teach and point out to them what to do ; so that what would otherwise have been dim and uncertain, became like an open book to them, or a clear path before them, on which they could proceed without hesitation. The Holy Spirit would not only call all things to their remembrance, but also throw a light upon what Christ had said to them, whereby they would more fully and clearly understand His design and purpose in building His Church for the saving of souls.

II. But now we purpose to take up the arguments of a substantive character, which we have somewhat already entrenched upon, deducible from the facts and words, recorded in the Scripture, of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles, respecting the Church. And first, as to the intimations and instructions our Lord gave in the early part of His ministry, *respecting the nature and character of that Spiritual Society* He was about to set up in the world; which will sufficiently prove that He had before His mind a clear idea of, and design for His Church, and what He wanted it to be; and that He endeavoured, as best He could, under the circumstances alluded to, to imbue the minds of His followers with that ideal.

Among the terms or figures by which the Church is spoken of, or represented to us in Scripture, none is more frequently used by our Blessed Saviour than that of a *Kingdom*; it is under this figure that He usually speaks of it in various Parables. It is alluded to not that it is like unto a kingdom so much, as that *it is a Kingdom*, which is likened unto this or that. "The Kingdom of Heaven," or "the Kingdom of God" *is like unto*; this is the constant form adopted. The Church is, then, the Kingdom of Christ, a real Kingdom, though of a spiritual character. And that the terms, "Kingdom of God," or "Kingdom of Heaven," in these Parables, do not refer to the Kingdom of Glory above, but to the Church on earth, we may judge from this, that Christ speaks of it as in an imperfect condition now—the bad mingled with the good, whereas in the kingdom above,

“there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.”

And the leading idea conveyed by our Lord in speaking of His Church as a Kingdom, is, that it will be a properly constituted organization or Society, with certain laws and regulations for the guidance and control of its members; and, that there will always be certain officers of various degrees to look after its welfare, and the well-being of all who belong to it, so that the object of its institution may be attained. And it naturally implies, that for the sake of maintaining unity, order, power, and influence, there must be but *one kind of government throughout*, under which all authority must be exercised in every part; so that it may be one and the same Kingdom where-soever it extends to. It implies that the several subjects of it, wherever they are, should loyally and gladly submit themselves to the lawfully appointed authority, and heartily support it; and that this lawfully appointed authority should be exercised in all places strictly according to the principles and fundamental laws of the Constitution; by which also those who are thereby empowered to rule or exercise their ministry, receive their authority.

Most people can readily perceive and understand how necessary and important this is in all civil governments, if anything like union and order is to be maintained; and can grasp the danger of non-conformity and insubordination, or the setting up of another authority or rule to that which had been

duly constituted and universally accepted. Our Saviour fully understood this, and perceived the danger and folly of any open opposition to this rule, or setting up any other kind of government than that which had been ordained in His Kingdom; and forcibly warned His believing people against breaking out into divisions and open feuds among themselves, and especially against forming other bodies, in addition or opposition to the one that He should set up and establish; when He said unto them, "Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation."

And how many things do we learn respecting the Church of Christ from those Parables of His! only, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Let us rapidly glance at a few of them.

In the Parable of the *Net*, which inclosed both the bad and good fishes, and in that of the *Field*, which contained Tares as well as the Wheat, our Blessed Lord plainly intimated that we must expect to find in His Church the evil mingled with the good; and that we must not look upon it as a perfect state, but as a preparation or training for such a condition, with a warning that a time of separation will come, when He "shall gather out of His *Kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

In the Parable of the *Sower*, Christ foretells us, that the message of salvation will not be heeded by different sorts of people from various reasons; and that the Word though listened to outwardly will not take root in their hearts; but, that it will find a

place in honest and good hearts, where it will spring and bear fruit; so that His people must only expect some to be savingly profited by the preaching of His Gospel in all the world.

Then in the Parable of the *Leaven*, Christ shows us the secret but sure and gradual change in the hearts and lives of those who truly receive the Word, or the grace of God, into their hearts; and its wonderful efficacy in subduing the evil of man's nature, it is like leaven in the midst of the flour, going on till the whole is leaven. The whole man becomes changed—his desires, his aim, and his will. He becomes a new creature, fitted for the Master's use.

Take again the Parable of the *Mustard-seed*; and we learn that our Lord would have us to understand, that from a small beginning outwardly, His Church would grow and spread abroad, till it became like a great tree whose branches would extend to the furthest ends of the earth—a universal society.

And in the Parable of the *Talents* He informs us that an account will be hereafter required of all for the gifts and opportunities which have been bestowed upon them. This, though it has an application to all men, has a special reference to the members of His Church, and those who minister therein, to whom Christ has entrusted talents in various measures: so that knowing this they may learn to make good use of the advantages He has given them, remembering that they carry with them corresponding responsibilities.

But one of the most instructive Parables is that

of the *Vine* and its branches. (St. John xv.) Here, indeed, we have the basis of true Christian unity set forth, and beautifully as well as accurately unfolded to our view. It is an illustration of great value, because it describes both the source and the strength of our union with one another. Our true union with one another is through our union with Christ Jesus first. It is not simply in all having certain views to which they will cleave, or in their agreeing to meet for worship together, and holding by one another. If this were all, we should be like so many particles of sand on the sea-shore, which the next tide or storm would scatter asunder: so little can we depend upon ourselves or others: but, made one with Christ, we rest upon a rock which nothing can shake; and our union and relationship to one another is secured and established by this new and living tie.

When Christ therefore said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," He speaks of a living organization, of a close and mystical union betwixt Himself and His Church, whereby all those who have been grafted into Him, become members of His mystical body and receive new life from Him; just as the branches when grafted become one with the parent stock, and are constantly sustained and nourished by the sap which they receive, so long as they are alive, and not detached from it. And the means which Christ has ordained for our being made one with Him is, as Scripture plainly intimates, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. And they who truly believe in Christ, and

love and obey Him, will never think lightly of this sacred ordinance; they will never forget all their life long that they have thereby been "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." And their faith, and love, and obedience to Christ will be shown as long as they make an earnest endeavour to live up to their holy profession and privilege, in thus being made Christians. For without these, Baptism will avail them nothing; since they break their covenant with God. Therefore Churchmen are taught from their youth upwards, in the Church Catechism, that "Repentance" is ever required of them, "whereby they forsake sin, and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament."

And then it is, that, being grafted into Christ, we become members one of another; we are united together in a holy brotherhood, and belong to one great Family or Household, of which Christ is the Head, which He nourishes by His grace continually, and over which he ever exercises a watchful care and loving solicitude.

And this is further exemplified in the beautiful Parable of the *Good Shepherd* (St. John x.), who careth for his Sheep, who calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them forth; who goeth before them, and the sheep follow him. For, said Christ plainly unto them, afterwards; "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture;" and again, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good, Shepherd giveth His life for the Sheep." And

again, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of Mine." There is something so touchingly tender, and loving, and true, in this parable, that one would fain linger awhile upon each one of the particulars mentioned, so as to fix them the better in our hearts; but must not here. It is a picture, however, as it has been said, of exceeding loveliness, and one that has ever been accounted most precious in the Church. The Saints of old loved to picture Christ bringing the weary one or the wanderer back again to the fold on His shoulders. And the more a true Christian entertains it in his heart, the more beautiful and the dearer to him will it become.

There is, however, another point in this Parable, running through the whole, to which our Saviour draws our attention, and which we should specially notice, since it bears upon the *principle of Unity*. And it is this, that it is an essential part of Christ's design, to gather together all His believing people everywhere into one body, that there may be *One fold, or flock*, even as there is one Shepherd, and one Supreme Bishop of our souls, Jesus Christ Himself. And since it was Christ's great design,—respecting which He was particularly anxious, and took much pains that it should be properly carried out—to build *one fold*, or have but *one flock*, that there might be unity among all those that were His, and that they should thus continue *as one body or society* in every age, and among all nations, then it can no longer be accounted a matter of indifference, whether Christians belong to it or no: and if they would be true to Christ, if they would be willing and obedient followers of the Lord,

then, undoubtedly, they will feel that they are not at liberty to separate from it, though it may not be all that they can desire—for what society or body can please all—they would feel that they ought not to set up other communities or join them.

The truer Christian a man is, the more he would shrink from doing this ; since it seems, on the very face of it, to be so contrary to our Lord's will, which should ever be of paramount importance in his eyes. It would at least be to him a doubtful expedient, with which he could never rest satisfied, though circumstances had led him into some separation ; since it has the appearance of making light of what Christ has particularly designed ; and to do which might prove detrimental to his soul's eternal welfare. For whatever excuses he might plead, whatever views he might entertain, it is a very serious thing not to fall in with our Lord's purpose, or take some other course which would lead him into any opposition to it. The simple yet earnest desire of his heart will be, 'Thy will, O Lord, not mine ; Thy way, not mine.'

Then, besides these Parables, by which Christ would illustrate the nature and character of His Church, He lays down *Certain Principles*, which, however familiar to our ears, and readily acknowledged as Scriptural, are nevertheless regarded as the laws of Christ's Kingdom, which He promulgated and made known. They are not only of great value in changing the natural character and disposition, but they serve to make and mould Christ's people into greater conformity to the likeness of Christ ; and it is the adoption of them, and being guided by them,

that Christians are best to be distinguished from other people, both in heart and life ; and the being leavened by them, marks them out from others, as " a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."

The idea, with the lessons our Lord inculcates, about *Unity*, which we have just noticed, is one of these principles: and the desire and endeavour of Christians to conform themselves to it, will lead them, like those to whom the Apostles ministered, to be " all of one heart, and one soul," and afterwards to act with " one accord."

Another of these principles is *Humility*. Thus, Christ says: " Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*:"—without this grace you cannot properly, and as you ought, become subjects of the Kingdom. " Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." (St. Matt. xviii. 2-4).

Another is *the Principle of Love*, which the members of His Kingdom are to exercise towards each other. For to impress this upon them, He says; " This is my commandment, *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*" (St. John xv. 12.) A higher example we could not have, than that of Christ Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us. This same law that was promulgated, He had before previously taught to the Twelve, so that they should in themselves learn to practice it. For He had said unto them: " A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this

shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (xiii. 34, 35.) And the same Evangelist, from whose Gospel these words are taken, writing many years afterwards to the Christians under his charge, said: "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." And, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren*:" a term by which the members of the Church were at first called. Then again, he impressed upon them this divine principle which Christ had given them, in these words: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 11, 14, 16, 18.)

And notice, also, how St. Peter enforces the same principle, in his first Epistle, when he says: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, *unto unfeigned love of the Brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*." (i. 22.) Then again he says emphatically:—"Love the Brotherhood." (ii. 17.) And after giving them various exhortations, he says, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, (here the principle of unity is inculcated), having compassion one of another, *love as brethren*, be pitiful, be courteous." (iii. 8).

Then there is *the Principle of Obedience*, founded on, and strengthened by, our love to Jesus, for He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (St. John

xiv. 15.) "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (v. 21.) and many such like words.

Notice also *the Principle of Service* Christians must take up. Thus, Christ says, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever shall be chief among you, *let him be your servant*;" even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (St. Matt. xx. 26-28.) His own example is to be our pattern; "I am among you *as he that serveth*." (St. Luke xxii. 27.)

The subjects of Christ's Kingdom are also to observe *the Principle of Self-denial, and Self-sacrifice*; bearing something, parting with something for the sake of others, which is akin to the former one. For Christ said to His disciples: "If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself*, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever *will lose his life, for my sake, shall find it*." (St. Matt. xvi. 24, 25.) There is a deep meaning in these solemn words.

Then there is the *Principle of Forgiveness*. Indeed, the very ground on which we can ourselves hope for forgiveness from God, is that we learn to forgive others who may in anywise have injured us. For Christ saith "If ye *forgive men their trespasses*, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (St. Mark vi. 14, 15.) And again emphatically

He says, "*Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*" (St. Luke vi. 37.)

There is no need to dwell at any length upon these Principles or laws of the kingdom; as they are generally admitted by all Christians without question, as forming part of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We but enumerate them, and then pass on. But we would observe that these and other principles of the Gospel were then for the most part new to the world, startlingly so; and are even yet opposed to the world's view of their own interests. Notice how our Lord's sermon on the Mount is full of these principles, that are to mould the subjects of His kingdom; and how in the beatitudes and other parts, their characters and dispositions are delineated.

They form, moreover, the staple of the preaching of the Apostles, afterwards, as could be abundantly shewn, and will be seen, in the instance of *Love* noticed above, and in the case of *Unity*, taken later on. As they always should do also, wheresoever the Gospel is preached. Nor can there be a faithful preaching of it, where, to please men, or to speak unto them smooth things, any of these principles are withheld, or kept in the background.

That there was a purpose, and a well defined plan, not only in the teaching of our Divine Redeemer, but in the order of His proceedings, having an eye to the building of His Church, and gradually leading up to it, may be observed from two or three considerations. First notice that He does not proceed to give

specific directions about the building of it, nor does he solemnly appoint chosen men to direct, superintend, and carry out the work until all is in readiness for this, and the time of His departure is at hand. Hence, though His design is evidently clearly mapped out in His own mind; it is not unfolded all at once to His disciples; it is only towards the end of His ministry that He gives them more complete instructions; and even then, it is not till the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and as they proceed under His illuminating guidance that they fully grasp the plan of Christ's Church.

Then observe, that before the final setting up of His Kingdom, the laying its foundation, and the giving to it a constitution agreeable to His will: these principles to which we have alluded are first proclaimed as the laws of His Kingdom, that men might know what is expected of them before they enter it; how their becoming subjects of it must affect their hearts and lives; moreover, He endeavours by various figures and Parables to illustrate the spiritual nature, as we have seen, the power, growth, and influence of the kingdom; and how dear to Him, and how closely and intimately connected with Him, the faithful members of it will be. These seem necessarily to have occupied the earlier part of His ministerial labours; and therefore we do not at first see the full development of the Church even sketched out.

Notice, moreover, how the intervening period of His ministry,—that is between the first announcement of it, its character and the promulgation of the laws or principles

of the kingdom, and, the final arrangements for its being set up—is employed, in gathering together materials, as it were, for the building, and preparing before hand for the work, that nothing may be wanting on His part for its being well established, and for its successfully accomplishing afterwards the object for which it was designed. This did not consist only in His Preaching and making known the coming of the kingdom; but in His drawing disciples after Him who, becoming attached to Him, should form the first members of His kingdom; and should show forth in their lives and actions, the principles of His Kingdom as examples to others: and then in His proceeding step by step, in His dealings with them, as well as in His instructions, in fitting them to take a leading part in the formation of His Kingdom. Faintly at first, and then more plainly, does He afterwards intimate the high position those whom He designated *Apostles* were to hold in it; unfolding to them privately, as they were able to bear or receive them, the mysteries of His Kingdom. Making trial of them whilst He was with them, and teaching them how to act as His chief ministers.

This will appear more plainly as we proceed. For it is and will be our endeavour, rather than take any other course, to follow that shown in our Lord's teaching and procedure. To take in order what He appears first to have attended to, or called attention to in His ministry, and then to consider the other points as they regularly arise afterwards, as well as we can; and avoid jumbling the records of His Gospel

together; and the not distinguishing one part from another, so that we may see how they naturally follow one another, in some continuity or regular succession.

And a further consideration of the Gospel history, in this light, should certainly assure us that Christ's mind was fully possessed with the design of founding His Society or Kingdom, which should extend over all Kingdoms, and yet not be of them; that He was accordingly making a wise and orderly preparation for it: and that there is no just ground for the imputation—or any such as can be reasonably and honestly sustained, after a thorough consideration of the subject—to say or to imagine that our Gracious Redeemer concerned Himself very little about the founding of His Church; that He took little or no trouble, or thought about the fashioning of it; that He had not any particular design or plan for it; or that He left it to chance, without any instructions, without any appointments, as to its government and order. This is but a gratuitous and unworthy supposition, for which there seems to be but little or no foundation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

THERE is an intense interest for the really earnest-minded Christian, in reading the New Testament, when he finds the right key to open these Scriptures. Though the outward sense may be plain and familiar to the ordinary reader; and the student may be able to pass an examination in them with credit, yet is there an inward sense, a deep and mystical truth in them underlying the words, which is very precious; and will rejoice the heart of the believer as the meaning of them is opened out to him, and he is enabled to read and understand the deep things of God, in the light and spirit in which they were written. To many they appear for the first time then, as a new revelation from God. Only they must be careful not to be carried away with any vagaries not in strict keeping with that Word; but must approach and receive it in an humble and teachable spirit, and let God speak to them through His Word, as originally received.

I. And in considering our Lord's ministry as recorded in the Holy Gospels, in confirmation of what has been stated before, it must be observed that the chief portion of His teaching had reference, both directly and indirectly, to the building of His Church, and providing for its future welfare, so as to secure the object for which it was designed. The

great and central fact of the Gospel, which we are ever to keep prominently before us is, that He *died for our sins* and *rose again for our justification*. And in doing all this, His great object and desire was to make us individually partakers of these inestimable blessings; that we through Him might be saved. Not by continuing in sin, or by being indifferent; not in trying to be saved by our own efforts as detached individuals; but by turning from sin, and being united to Christ, becoming *one with Him*; being trained as His people should be, and thus living unto righteousness. And it is part of Christ's grand scheme for our salvation, nay, it is the will of God, to do this through the instrumentality of the Church which He founded. This was the great object for which He founded such a universal and divine society for His people. For what else did He do this? For what other purpose was the Church founded, and regarding which He took so much pains, if not this?

It was not till Christ was about thirty years of age, as we learn, that He began His ministry. It was not till after His baptism in Jordan by the Baptist—who appears not to have known that Jesus was the Christ, until coming up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God was seen descending from above, and a voice proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,”—he recognised Jesus as the Christ. Hitherto John had been preaching of the coming of the Messiah, and saying, “Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is

at hand." But after what he saw at the baptism of Jesus, he no longer hesitated, but "bare record that this is the Son of God." The object in alluding to these and the following facts in the history of our Saviour's ministry is to show, that, having the design in His mind of building the Church as an universal Society for His followers, He proceeded to unfold it, and provide for it gradually, orderly, cautiously, wisely, and after a rational manner.

But it was not then at once that Christ entered upon His ministry. A season of retirement in the wilderness was chosen as a preparation for it, when he could more fully realise the great work before Him. Here He was tempted of the Devil. Those who knew Him looked for Him, and doubtless wondered at His disappearance for awhile. Many had already made acquaintance with Jesus. The day after Christ's Baptism, John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples, and seeing Jesus walking at a little distance, he pointed Him out to them, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." And seizing the opportunity they followed Jesus, who entered into conversation with them, and they abode with Him that day.

One of these was probably John the Evangelist, the other was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother: who, having informed this brother that he had found the Messiah, brought and introduced him to Jesus. In the same city there was another man named Philip, whom Jesus directly called to follow Him. And shortly after this Philip informed an acquaintance of his, a very

devout man, that he had found Him of whom Moses had written such great things. This man, named Nathaniel, could hardly believe it, but was persuaded to "come and see;" and from his intercourse with Jesus, he was at once convinced from something He said that Jesus was truly "the Son of God." The news spread from mouth to mouth, and one religious friend communicated the tidings to another, that the long promised Messiah had appeared. Thus there were a number that believed on Him, and were ready to follow Him whenever He appeared. But for awhile Christ still keeps very quiet.

His first public appearance, when He gave any sign of His divine power, was at Cana, in Galilee, where He turned the water into wine at the marriage-feast. For St. John says: "*This beginning of miracles* did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him." (ii. 11.) Shortly afterwards he went up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover; when His first cleansing of the Temple took place; and upon the Jews asking for a sign of His authority, He foretells His own death and resurrection to life again in three days; but this is purposely said, in symbolic language, so that they thought He spake of the material temple in which they were standing. It was during His stay at Jerusalem, also, that Nicodemus sought an interview with Jesus by night, and learned from Him the solemn truth, that a man must be born again, of water and of the Spirit, before he could truly enter the Kingdom of God.

On His way back to Galilee, while passing through Samaria, Christ encountered the woman at Jacob's well; and, asking for a drink of water, discourses to her of that well of water springing up to Eternal life. He next addresses the Samaritans, that came out to see Him at the woman's invitation; and after staying with them two days, many more were led to believe on Him. He then returns to Galilee, *in the power of the Spirit*. And at Cana, where he had wrought His first miracle, He wrought another, in healing the nobleman's child, who was at the point of death. Now, hitherto, He seems to have refrained from preaching publicly; though the fame of Him went out through all the region round about.

The formal commencement of Christ's ministry is placed by all the first three Evangelists after this return into Galilee, and posterior to the imprisonment of John the Baptist. (St. Matt. iv. 12.; St. Mark i. 14.; St. Luke iv. 14.) "From *that time*," St. Matthew (iv. 17.) tells us that, "Jesus *began to preach*, and to say, Repent; for the Kingdom of Heaven *is at hand*." The same announcement as His forerunner, John the Baptist had made: the Kingdom was not yet set up, though Christ had come to preach, but it was at hand, and He was preparing men's minds for it. See also St. Mark (i. 14, 15.) His first public preaching took place in the Synagogues of Galilee: and when He came to Nazareth, His native town, where He had been brought up as a youth, they listened with great interest at first to His sermon; but when

He spake of God's mercy to others, as well as to those living in Israel, the people were offended at Him; thrust Him out of the Synagogue, and would have killed him, if He had not marvellously escaped out of their hands. Thus, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not:" and the truth of His own words were verified, that "No prophet is accepted in His own country." Then it was that He went down to Capernaum, and settled there; for He had several disciples there; and He taught the people on the Sabbath days: and we are told that "they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power." Here, too, He again wrought miracles; casting out an unclean spirit at a word; healing Simon's wife's mother of a fever; and curing many sick persons of their diseases, by simply laying his hands on every one of them.

On one occasion He taught the people from Simon's ship; and afterwards bidding Simon to launch out into the deep, and to let down his net, a miraculous draught of fishes was taken; at which all that were with them were astonished, for they had toiled all night and taken nothing. It was after this that Christ secured the personal service and attendance of *four* of His Disciples, for thus far He had been without any. He needed their help, for He was about to proceed on His first missionary circuit. And how did He begin this great work? St. Mark tells (i. 35-39.) that, "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went, and departed into a solitary place, and

there prayed." Thus He fortified Himself for the undertaking. And when Simon came to look for Him, He said, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." And He went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their Synagogues, and casting out devils.

It was about this time that Christ also delivered His famous Sermon on the Mount. It is probable, that a great multitude of His disciples that resided in and around Capernaum, accompanied Him and the *four* He had selected, to see Him on His way, as He was going forth on this missionary tour. And when they had ascended one of the high mountains not far from Capernaum, He sat down, and taught His followers the fundamental principles of His Kingdom. During this tour also, Christ healed the leper, who kneeling down, had cried, saying to Jesus, "If Thou wilt, thou can'st make me clean." On His return to Capernaum, while working other cures, Christ adds another disciple to the number of those who were personally to attend Him. This was Matthew, whom He saw sitting at the receipt of custom; and who at Christ's call, "left all, rose up, and followed Him." There were then *five* of the Disciples whom Christ had associated to be constantly with Him in His labours. We hear of no more for some little time; but it is evident that our Lord gradually made up the number to twelve.

The second year of our Lord's ministry begins by His again attending the Passover at Jerusalem, mentioned by St. John (v. 1), during which He heals the impotent

man at the pool of Bethesda, when the Jews cavil at him, and persecute Him for it. Some other occurrences happen on His return to Capernaum; but as yet the Twelve had not been ordained to their office, nor had the name of "Apostles" yet been given to them. This we gather both from the testimony of St. Mark and St. Luke. "Hitherto, then, they had been merely disciples—distinguished, perhaps," as Greswell, one of our best Harmonists of the Gospels, says, in his learned "Dissertations," "by nothing above the rest of the disciples in common, except that all, or some of them, might have been personally called by our Saviour—as the rest of the disciples had not. But, from this time forward they were expressly discriminated from the rest, and formed into a body, or society of their own." A catalogue of their names is given by the first three Evangelists, which is repeated in the Acts of the Apostles; and hence forward they are especially spoken of as "The Twelve."

As the above named writer observes, "The wisdom and expediency of suffering the Twelve to become at first, and for some time after to continue, merely disciples—in order to the trial of their faith in, and attachment to, Christ, if not to their personal conviction—before they were elevated to the rank of Apostles, must be obvious. Our Lord's knowledge of the human heart is, *a priori*, a sufficient voucher, that, in making choice of these, He was choosing those, who in point of every moral requisite, were the fittest to be selected to a new and peculiar relation to Himself,

and for the instruments by which, in the course of time, He designed to work in the propagation of His Gospel." And when we consider the momentous consequences which were to be wrought through their instrumentality in the future, we must needs see that, next to our Lord suffering for mankind, to select, educate, and appoint suitable men to be master-builders of His Church, was one of the most important acts of His lifetime upon earth.

And our Lord indeed, seems to have felt it to be so; for He does not enter upon their ordination without a corresponding degree of preparation—nor proceed in it without an equal gravity and solemnity. The night before He spends on the mountain apart, in earnest prayer; then, as soon as it is day, He calls forth the whole number of the Disciples, and out of them He selects twelve, whom he calls forth by name, and invests with a new, and a peculiar designation, expressive of the same relation to Himself, as that in which he had appeared and acted with reference to the Father. Since Christ when He parted with the Apostles before His Ascension into Heaven, lifted up His hands and blessed them, so it is supposed that He did the like now, when He ordained the Twelve.

Now mark especially the course of events after their ordination. Christ does not at once send them forth to preach in His name. He keeps them by His side, so that they may see the miracles He wrought, listen to His discourses when He preaches to the people, and receive further instruction from Him in private,

when He made them to understand the meaning of His Parables, and other symbolic words, for He said to them, "*Unto you* it is given to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of Heaven, but to others in Parables." Several events are recorded as taking place; and especially His *second* missionary tour, mentioned in St. Luke viii. 1, when He takes "the Twelve" with Him. And during which they hear our Saviour relate the Parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven; the interpretation of all which He gives to "the Twelve" when alone with Him. They have to cross the Lake of Galilee with Him, and a storm arising they are in danger of perishing, when He calms the sea in a moment, so that they ask among themselves, What manner of man is this, that even the sea and the wind obey him? Other miracles and instructions follow. See the remainder of the 8th chapter of St. Luke.

After a time, a *third* missionary tour is to be undertaken; and on this occasion our Lord employed the services of others; and sent forth the "Twelve" by themselves (St. Matt. x. 5, St. Luke ix. 1, 2). The evident design of our Lord was, to make trial during His ministry of "the Twelve;" and that, after His example, they might learn how to proceed, and try their powers of preaching, and the service given them, so that while He was yet with them He might give them more particular directions about what they were to do, and how they were to go about it. He told them to what people they were to go; and said unto them, "As ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom

of heaven *is at hand*." It is the same announcement as had previously been given by John the Baptist and our Lord Himself. It was at hand, it had not yet been set up; it would be before long. On this occasion Christ not only gave them supernatural powers, as credentials of their authority received from Him to preach in His name; but gave them also special instructions, and impressed upon them the exalted position they would hold as the heralds of His Kingdom.

They were not to burden themselves with money, or too much clothing. They were to stay awhile in those places where they were well received: and their sojourn there would bring a blessing upon that city or house. If, however, they were not received, they were to depart out of that house or city, and to "shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them." They must expect to meet with repulses, and even persecutions; and to be brought before rulers, and scourged: but they were to take no thought how, or what they should speak in self-defence; for in the same hour the Holy Ghost would teach them what to say. Still they must be prepared to give their lives, if needs be, for His name's sake in carrying His message to others; for it was a mission of no little trouble or peril. It was one of the noblest callings that men on earth could engage in; and the blessing and reward of those who gave heed to them, and welcomed them would be great indeed; for, said Christ, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me. (St. Matt. x. 40, 41.) For the treatment

shown to the ambassador, is in fact regarded as the honour done to his Sovereign. It must be observed also that these instructions and intimations seem to have reference not only to the present occasion; but to all future occasions, when engaged in His service; even after He had left them.

But in addition to "the Twelve," our blessed Lord, some little time afterwards—for several intervening events are recorded—set apart for the ministry another set of disciples; clearly of different standing to "the Twelve:" for St. Luke tells us that "the Lord appointed *Seventy* also, and sent them two and two before His face, into every city and place whither He Himself would come." (x. 1.) The increasing necessities of His ministry appear to have come upon Him. "Therefore said He unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." He also gave unto them specific directions what to do, and what to expect, as He had done to "the Twelve." The burden of their message was much the same, "the Kingdom of God *is come nigh unto you.*" (v. 9.) And He concludes what He said unto them with a similar declaration of their being also His representatives and ambassadors; "He that heareth you heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." (v. 16.)

Thus, then, even in the life-time of our Saviour, we may perceive a disparity of ministers; and that those whom He sent forth on these two occasions were not of equal rank and office. A little attention to the Gospel narrative will soon shew us that there

was a distinct difference between the rank of "the Twelve," and the rank of "the Seventy:" and that "the Twelve" were in a higher rank than that of "the Seventy;" though both of them were employed in the same work of proclaiming the advent of the Messiah. In the *first ordination*, the individuals were distinguished by a peculiar title; they are marked by selection, by the smallness of their numbers; and their selection was from the general body of the Redeemer's followers. They were called *Apostles*; their number was *twelve*; they were *chosen out of the disciples*, and the *names* of each are specially recorded.

It is important to bear these points in mind, while we contrast them with the other body of ministers whom Christ appointed; as stated in the record of the *second ordination*, which He, as the Great Head of the Church, held, before sending out "the Seventy." It appears that He did not deem His ministry complete, although He Himself personally preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, looked after the spiritual welfare of His followers, and had already associated with Himself "The Twelve" whom He had chosen to assist Him. The appointment of "the Seventy" was, then, clearly an extension of the Lord's ministry, by which He admitted a *second body* of His disciples into it. And what it is needful to point out here, is, that the members of this second body were not an addition to the *first body*, set apart for the furtherance of the Gospel, but an order of ministers wholly distinct and separate from it. The two bodies are kept markedly

apart in Scripture. The one is as clearly recognised by the title of "the Twelve," as the other is by that of "the Seventy." The latter came under the Saviour's care and guidance, but by no means in that peculiar and distinguished manner in which the former were instructed by Him. "The Twelve" were more continually present with our blessed Lord as He went from place to place, and were permitted to listen to His more intimate and spiritual conversations on divine subjects. To them He more especially unfolded the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. They were gathered round Jesus at the last Supper; for them He specially interceded. (John xvii.) Upon the Apostles it was that He conferred the signal privilege of witnessing His departure from earth and His Ascension into glory. (St. Mark xvi. 16-19.) All these indications of peculiar favour concur to draw a clear line of distinction between the two bodies that at this time constituted the ministry which our Lord appointed; and plainly indicate that "the Twelve" were in a higher order of the ministry than "the Seventy."

It has been asked by some Commentators, why our Lord fixed upon the number Seventy? And they trace in it an analogy to *the Seventy* which composed the Jewish Sanhedrim, which represented the Seventy Elders of the tribes of Israel, to whom Moses, at God's bidding, imparted a portion of his spirit, that they might assist him. (Numb. xi. 16, 19.) Previous to this, we read in the seventh Chapter of Numbers, that there were *twelve Princes* of the tribes of Israel; a prince of every tribe, that made

their several offerings at the dedication of the Tabernacle. Hence we notice a threefold order of officers for carrying on the government under the Jewish dispensation : Moses at the head, then the twelve Princes of the several tribes, and lastly the Seventy members of the Sanhedrim.

And in addition to these, God bestowed upon His people the higher gift of a ministry. And in constructing this latter body of men, it is noticed that He appointed divers grades or orders—orders distinct from each other, not only in dignity, but in the offices they were to fill, and the functions they were each to execute. The High Priest, the Priests, and the Levites, all ministers, but *unequal in degree*, yet all and each were ordained of God. This is beyond all doubt and controversy. Now the Christian ministry would appear by our Lord's shewing, and by what He appointed, to be a counterpart of the Jewish Dispensation. In promulgating His Gospel, our Blessed Saviour had not said a word against the Jewish form of government, as then existing ; nor did He in any way discountenance the ministry established among them, but only reproved the false glosses and traditions of the doctors of the law. He thereby tacitly approved it ; and judged it proper that a threefold order of ministers should be perpetuated in the Christian Church.

It is clear that in our Saviour's time there was a subordination in the degrees of the Jewish ministry. The Priests were in a higher rank to that of the Levites, and the High-priest is a still higher rank to that of the Priests. Our Lord, then, had not destroyed the principle in establishing the new dispensation, but rather seemed to

ratify and confirm it, by having divers orders or ranks *in His* ministry: framing it after the model of the Jewish ministry; excepting, however, what was ceremonial and typical in it. Yet respecting these, He, in His own Person fulfilled the form and object of that ancient economy, by the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross: for, as the writer to the Hebrews says, "Every Priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Indeed the greater portion of this sacred book is to show how Christ fulfilled the ancient order of things ordained of God, and that it was to be a type of His own work and ministry, which it foreshadowed, and was only perfected in Him. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which *they* offered year by year, make the comers thereunto perfect."

Indeed, the constitution of the Christian Church was in more ways than one typified by that of the Jewish. Christianity was a continuation of it, a larger development of God's Church, no longer to be confined to one people, but to be extended to *all nations*. It was a brighter and more glorious enlargement of the same religion which subsisted under the law and the prophets: and yet with a marked difference. Everything set forth in the Levitical dispensation, in type and shadow, was embodied in the Christian dispensation in reality and substance. The sacrifices in the one were fulfilled in the

other. They were collected and substantiated in Jesus. The waters of sprinkling had their antitype and completeness; they spoke of, and were developed in their full efficacy in the sanctification of the Spirit. The Tabernacle itself, with its courts, its worshippers, its supernatural lights, was the pattern of the Christian Church; its holy of holies, the department of the Church above; its outer sanctuary, the worshipping Church below. This parallelism is strikingly illustrated by the writer to the Hebrews. (See Chaps. ix, 9, 12, 24, viii, 5.) And this correspondence between the two dispensations was, it is conceived, not limited to sacrifices and ceremonies, but was consistently carried out into the ministry itself. The orders of priesthood in Israel were to be types of the better ministry in the New Covenant. The Church in the wilderness had its grades of ministerial position; and its threefold orders were, it is shewn, to be carried out into the ministry of Christ's Church.

But it is not solely from its *analogy* to the Jewish Church that we feel drawn to accept a three-fold order of ministers in the Church of Christ, having different grades; though this should weigh for something, since we may expect to find a uniformity in the Divine proceedings. The welfare of society in a kingdom not only requires, but is best served, by having officers of various ranks and degrees of authority, and not that they should be all equal, and have all the same power in carrying out the executive; and therefore it is found necessary for the interests of any country that the majority of officers should be in subordination to a

few heads, properly authorised. But it is not this either, that has the greatest weight with us. It is that Christ *has given us in His own ministry a pattern for His Church* in this matter. Moses ordered all things according to the pattern showed unto him in the Mount. And the Apostles followed *the pattern*, showed to them by Christ while He was yet with them; for, as we shall afterwards see, the Apostles settled the Constitution of the Church, so that in each unit or Diocese of the Church, there should be a three-fold order of ministers, as in our Saviour's time. And thus it comes to pass that in every complete part of the Church, we find a Bishop at the head, assisted by two other orders, the Priests and Deacons, who are subject to him. Our blessed Saviour appears to have clearly indicated by His own actions and appointments, the pattern to those whom He commissioned, and gave authority *as to how* the Christian ministry should be fashioned. In the two Orders of ministers whom He ordained in addition to Himself, He clearly points out His design that there should be a gradation of offices, that He did not mean that the ministers of His Church should all be equal in position and rank; but that some should have rule, and others be subservient.

Now this thing was not of man's device; the Apostles would not of their own heads, depending upon their own wisdom alone, have established such *a form of government for the Church*. It was Jesus Christ who designed from the beginning that there should be ministers of different ranks. And to this St. Paul

bears witness, for when speaking of the institution of the Gospel ministry which Christ provided for the building up of His Church, he said, "*And He gave some, Apostles ; and some, Prophets ; and some, Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). And if this is the Lord's doing, part of his design—if Christ Himself has from the beginning appointed that there shall be different kinds of offices, ministries, and functions in His Church ; if He Himself has decreed that some are to bear rule, and others are to be under them, to be guided and governed by them ; then, who are we that we should dare to set aside His will and design ? Who are we that we should despise it or speak lightly of it, call it tyrannical, or mere sacerdotalism ? It is Christ, the Lord, who hath determined the form of government in the Church, and the discipline by which it is to be upheld. And if we love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth—as we profess to do—shall we not give in our loyal and grateful adhesion to His will ? For we must bear in mind that in all our Saviour did, in this respect, He had a purpose, He had a regard to the future ; it was His desire to arrange, and point out to those whom He should place in authority, the best means, which He, in His infinite wisdom, could perceive, for the preservation of peace and unity in His Church.

Consider for a moment, Christ was Himself the spiritual Guide and Shepherd of His people. In Him

the ministerial functions were all concentrated. He was everything to His Church, the Minister Himself of the true Tabernacle, the High Priest of our profession, the Pastor and Bishop of our souls. God "gave Him to be *the Head over all things to the Church which is His body.*" He fulfilled in His Person all ministerial duties. The teaching in His Church flowed from his lips; the appointments introduced into it were the result of His wisdom; the regulations which were to control it, emanated from His authority. Yet in doing this, the Saviour would make use of other chosen instruments to effect His purpose; He did not stand alone in the ministry of the New Covenant; nor did He deem the ecclesiastical structure, the condition of His kingdom, complete, in a single order of the ministry. He therefore proceeded to make further arrangements, and gave an example of its perfect character while on earth among His followers, and hereby shadowed forth *a three-fold Order.* He Himself constituted *the first Order*, and was the Bishop or superintending authority in the Church; it belonged to Him to regulate, to appoint, to provide and send forth a ministry. The Apostles were of *the second Order*; and it was given them to teach and to baptize; but not yet while Christ was with them were they permitted to ordain or send forth labourers, or mark out new fields of missions. Then "the Seventy" clearly occupied *a third Order*, a lower position, but still exercising ministerial functions; but plainly not equal in importance to the Apostles, whom Christ had

first called. (See Boyd, on the Church.) It is singular that we never hear again, in the Gospels, or in any other part of the New Testament, of "the Seventy," after their return to our Lord on this occasion. They did not cease to exist. We never read that Christ withdrew from them their authority to preach and make known His Kingdom. We may readily believe that they still continued to exercise their ministry, though no mention of them is again made. It is probable that many, if not all of them, assisted in laying the foundation of the Church, and came under the designation of the "Prophets," of whom St. Paul speaks, when, alluding to this subject, he says, "ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and *Prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.)

This silence of itself, respecting "the Seventy," however, marks another broad difference that was made between them and "the Twelve." For though it may partly be accounted for by reason of the appointment of "the Seventy" being made towards the close of our Saviour's life, at least within a year of His death: still this silence becomes all the more remarkable when we consider how frequently "the Twelve" are spoken of during this period. And it became the more marked and pointed still when we notice that, over and above His other instructions respecting the nature, character, and growth of His Kingdom; the principles that should guide the subjects of it, as well as the disposition and characteristics of

His people, He gave to "the Twelve" *alone*, express instructions about the setting up of His Kingdom, about the giving to it a Constitution, implied in the foundation of it, intimating to them, in private, the position and authority with which they, as one body, would be invested; that they might know how to act under changed circumstances, when He had taken His departure.

These communications are not made to "the Seventy," nor to the body of the disciples, but to "the Twelve" by themselves. And from Christ's transferring *to them alone*, before He left them, and that by a solemn consecration of them, *all authority and power*, it must surely be inferred that Christ designed them, at this time, to take a higher position; and, as He was going away, that they should take His place on earth, in the government of His Church, according to the instructions made known unto them; that they should henceforth, as a body, stand in *the first order* of His ministers: and that all authority, regulations, and appointments *should come from and through them*; that all other ministers, as well as all that should be received into His New Kingdom, should be subject unto them; and that all arrangements and ordinances made by them for the continuance of their order in the future, for transmitting their authority, for the government of the Church, should be held to be valid, and of divine appointment for all generations. Indeed, we have no Scriptural authority for any other form of Church Government: and it seems

at least presumptuous to attempt any other, though circumstances, for a time, may compel some men to seek other means for sustaining the divine life in their souls, so that they might be true to Jesus, and believe only those truths revealed to them in God's Holy Word.

II.—In considering these special communications to “the Twelve” concerning His Church, their position in it, and how they should act, we should observe, that we are now entering upon another department of evidence, respecting the Will and Design of Christ, that will require all our attention.

The first plain intimation of His Will and Design to “the Twelve” was given when He revealed it in words we reverted to at the beginning of this evidence, saying:—“Upon this rock I will build my Church;” intimating that it would be a secure and immoveable Kingdom, able to resist all assaults, so that, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (St. Matt, xvi. 18.) We shall not here enter upon the vexed question, as to whether St. Peter was this rock or no. Interpreting Scripture by Scripture, it may be said, that however St. Peter may be brought in, as having a part in founding the Church, we are elsewhere in the sacred volume assured, that “this rock is Christ,” Christ, “the Rock of Ages:” for St. Paul, alluding to the matter, says, “And other Foundation can no man lay, *than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.*” (1 Cor. ii. 11.) In one sense it is said to be built upon the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets, and in which work St. Peter

took the lead at first, but still Jesus Christ, is "the chief corner-stone." They were employed by Christ, who was the Builder, "*by whom*" all was done then and hereafter. (Eph. ii. 20.)

What they did was for Him, solely by His authority and directions; it is not to be allowed that they, or any one of them, could make the Church safe and indestructible, amid all the changes and shocks of time. It was Christ alone that would do this; therefore may we take up our song in the Church's darkest hour, as Luther did, in the words of the Psalmist, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof . . . God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."

Bishop Pearson, speaking upon these words of Christ, says, "Our Lord here, and in St. Matt. xviii, 17, speaks prophetically of a Society to be formed hereafter by Himself: and the Holy Spirit, in recording His words, uses prophetically the word *Ecclesia*, by which the Church was to be known in all ages, and in all countries of the world." (See also Bishop Wordsworth in loco.) Then follows an intimation—for the words as yet refer to the future—of the installation of the Apostles as the guardians and rulers of the Church. For when He asked them, "Whom *say ye* that I am?" St. Peter, in the name of them all, exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God;" then our Lord further added, and

said unto Peter, as the representative of the rest of the Apostles for whom he had been speaking: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." (St. Matt. xvi. 19.) That this power was not alone given to St. Peter, but to the Apostles as a body, is sufficiently evident from the words a little later on, *spoken to all*, when almost the identical same words are used, but applied in the plural number, to all the Apostles, reaffirming the same power in a more solemn manner, saying, "Verily I say *unto you*, whatsoever *ye* shall bind on Earth," &c. (St. Matt. xviii. 18.)

And again, after His Resurrection, He reminded them of the power and authority with which He had endowed *them all*, when He said; "Whosoever sins *ye* remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins *ye* retain, they are retained." (St. John xx. 23). So that there is really nothing in the first words that is *peculiar* to St. Peter, but what is common to all the Apostles, and as giving to them *equal power with him*, though he often comes forward actively as their representative; for, this also is not to be lost sight of, and without going further into the matter, at present it is right to admit that, from one cause or another, St. Peter without doubt held in some respects the first place among the Apostles; and was regarded as the representative and spokesman for the rest; but not otherwise, as having any authority

above or independent of them, but only acting and speaking in behalf of the others.

The authority and power in the Church that St. Peter had, was, then, truly bestowed on all the Apostles. It was certainly not confined to one of them. *Twelve at the first had equal rule.* And this authority in the Church was, again, through the Apostles, conferred on the whole Episcopate, who should succeed them in the government of the Church. Hence it is, that the existing Bishops, who follow the Apostolic rule, exercise the powers granted by the Lord to His Church; not, however, in any arbitrary manner, but according to the rules laid down for all to whom this authority is given. Hence, St. Chrysostom says that "the Bishops are those faithful servants in the parable, whom the Lord sets over His household." And before him, Irenæus, in the second century, says, "The Apostles delivered the Churches to the Bishops." (Lib. v. cap. 20.) So Tertullian, in the third century, has it, that, "as the Church of Smyrna had Polycarp placed Bishop there by John (the Apostle), so the other Churches are able to show those who they have had constituted Bishops *from the Apostles*; and who are, as it were, the children of the Apostles, propagated by them." (De Præscr: c. 32.)

By the expressions, "binding" and "loosing," it may be sufficient to say, without going more deeply into the subject, that they denote the disciplinary power in governing the Church. This was primarily in the hands of Christ, and belonged independently to

Him. "He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7.) This Christ Himself asserts when He says: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18.) And this power, as regards "binding" and "loosing," He communicates to *all His Apostles*, and by them to their successors, to be used only as it was most agreeable to His will, which He unfolded in other words to them. Hence whatsoever they declare to be lawful, and constitute to be done in the Church, or whatsoever they shall forbid, as contrary to the will of Christ, shall be ratified and held good by God; and more especially when including all the measures necessary for the establishment and government of the Church. And this power was indisputably exercised by them, as witnessed in the Council held at Jerusalem, when nearly the whole of the Mosaic ritual of the law was *loosed*, given up, and abrogated; while part of it was *bound*, and still held obligatory. (Acts xv., see also Acts x. 28, and xxi. 25.)

The "remitting" and "retaining" of sins, may carry with them a further meaning, which we need not consider here. It is sufficient that we gather from our Saviour's words, that "the whole of the *new spiritual community*," as an able German Commentator observes, "which He came to found was to take its rise from the Apostles and their labours. No one became a Christian save through them, and thus the

Church throughout all time is built in living union with its origin. Christianity is no bare summary of truths and reflections, to which a man even in a state of isolation might attain": he must, by the means appointed, get new life, from the *Person* of Christ. Christianity "is a life-stream which flows through the human race, and is offered for their acceptance, and its fountains must reach every separate individual who is to be drawn within the circle of saving life. The Gospel is identical with, and grown into union with, the persons. That which lies wrapt up in Christ Jesus as the centre and germ of the new life, first spreads itself forth in the company of the Apostles, and from them into the widening circle of life which gradually expands throughout the world." (See Olshausen in loco.) Ample testimony of this is given in the records of the Acts of the Apostles.

On another occasion Christ intimates to His Apostles that, in their corporate capacity, a new dignity and new privileges awaited them of a spiritual character in His Kingdom. St. Peter, as usually the foremost in speaking, acting in behalf of the rest, said unto Jesus, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" "O the goodness of Jesus Christ!" exclaims one, "Instead of checking the too forward confidence of these beginners, He comforts and fortifies them by His mildness, and encourages them by the prospect of rewards." For in answer, "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the

Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, *ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" (St. Matt. xix. 27, 28.) And later on, in more emphatic words, but repeating what is here said, Christ speaks to them after this manner, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" (St. Luke xxii. 28, 30).

In referring to the former of these two passages, there is some difficulty in determining to what period the expression, "the regeneration" relates. Some commentators think it has reference to the period immediately after the Ascension of our Lord, when the Son of Man was glorified; others to the time when our Blessed Saviour shall come in the glory of the Father, with all His holy angels to judge the quick and dead. Now the first of these seems to be the probable time primarily designated; for, it should be observed, that the passage does not speak of His *coming again* in His glory, but of the time *when He shall sit on the throne* of His glory; which, if we may judge from what St. John says, took place after His Ascension; for on turning to chapter vii., v. 39, of His Gospel we read, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not glorified." When, then, the Holy Ghost was given Jesus was evidently seated on the throne of His glory. So also

in chapter xii., v. 16, the same Evangelist says again, "These things understood not His Disciples, at the first; but when Jesus *was glorified*, then remembered they these things;" evidently pointing to a period immediately after the Ascension. The time referred to, then, in the expression "the regeneration" is plainly that which should take place after Christ had left the Apostles and returned to heaven; having previously appointed them as governors in His Kingdom, and intrusted to their charge the formation, and future care, of His Church; a time when there would be, and certainly was, the beginning of a regeneration of mankind in the awakening and conversion of souls, who would through them be received into Christ's body, the Church, by Baptism.

And the expression "the twelve tribes of Israel," over whom they were to be appointed judges, is evidently meant to be symbolical of *the whole visible body of the Church*—the true Israel of God. And in there being "Twelve thrones" for them; one for each, it clearly intimates that one of them *was not* to be above the others, or set upon a super-eminent throne over them, for all were to be Princes alike; and the judgment and determination of matters, especially in the measures taken for the formation and future government of the Church, was not to be in the hands of one, *but equally in the hands of all* the Apostles—there was to be no difference in their rank and authority. By naming "the twelve" in number together as thus equal, our Lord seems to signify that the whole number are to act in union together as

rulers and judges, or rather, that *the whole number of those who should be rulers and judges*, then, or hereafter, should act in concert and unison together. And this view of the passage becomes the more needful, because Judas having forfeited his throne, it became necessary that it should be filled by another, when Matthias was chosen. And that it was not eventually to be limited to Twelve, there is ample evidence, for if it did not extend to others that should be hereafter, on the increase of the Church, appointed to rule and judge, then St. Paul must be excluded, and others whom the Apostles should associate with themselves, and regard as their successors in office.

And *as* in the making of laws, settling the ordinances, and what modes of action they should take in laying down a Constitution for the Church, they were as a corporate body or college to consult and agree together as to what was necessary; *so* also, in maintaining and carrying out the established Constitution, and the rules and principles for the preservation of purity, order, and unity, within the Church, the Apostles were *one and all* to have an equal share both of responsibility and authority. Though at first it would be necessary for the Apostles frequently to see each other and confer together; yet when matters were for the most part settled, there would not be that necessity for their concerting together so much; and then would they be more at liberty to go forth individually, to disseminate the truth, and to plant the Church, according to the will of Christ, "among all nations;" each of them severally endeavouring to establish and govern the Church, in

their respective spheres, after some one uniform manner as approved and authorized by *the whole number*. And only when some new difficulty or difference should arise would it be necessary for some of them to meet together to decide upon what was to be done.

And this, as we may learn, was the course afterwards taken by the Apostles; and acted upon by the ancient Church of Christ, long before the Papacy arose and eventually usurped the entire authority of the Church into its own hands; throwing down all other thrones or seats of authority and judgment but their own; thereby not only interfering with, and setting at nought other ordained powers in the Church, but making the word of Christ of none effect by their traditions. This was long ago the real cause of much division, disunion, and bitter dissension in the Church, (as we have evidence to show) and the overthrowing of the plan or method which Christ had laid down for the government of His Church. For in Christ's words, we have the root-principle, the germ, out of which was to grow the future instrumentality, whereby He trusted to have order and unity preserved in His Church.

Bishop Hall, commenting on the passage, draws forth several points in a very terse manner, observing that, "the Twelve tribes are the Church; the Apostles must be their judges and governors; their sitting, show authority; their sitting on thrones, eminence of power; their sitting on twelve thrones, equality of their rule; their sitting to judge, power and exercise of jurisdiction; their sitting to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, the

universality of their power and jurisdiction. And what judgment could this be? Ecclesiastical and spiritual—for civil rule they challenged not. And what thrones but Apostolical, and by derivation Episcopal. Who knows not how ordinary that style is—the Bishop's throne? We find it even in an *Ærius* himself. And if the Apostle's seat was his throne, and the Bishops succeeded the Apostles, who can deny them this power of spiritual judicature and jurisdiction?" (Episcopacy by Divine Right, Part ii, Sec. 2.)

The learned Dr. Hammond makes also the following valuable remarks: "This power wherein the Apostles, not all of them together (only), *but Peter and each of them singly* in his *κλήρος* or *ἴδιος τόπος*, province or place (Acts i. 25.) being thus in part, but entirely conferred on each of them, *a several throne for every one*; and being of so visible use, not only for the first planting, but for *the propagating and conservation of the Church*, it cannot be imagined that it should be temporary, and determine in the persons of those twelve." And after naming various reasons for this conclusion, such as the necessity of order; of having rules both for the supply of those things that should be found wanting for the well-being and preservation of each Church, and also for the securing of the flock from heretics, Dr. Hammond continues, "by which it will clearly appear, as anything in story can, that the office of power in the Church bestowed by Christ on the Apostles was not to determine in their persons, but to continue in their successors to future ages."

(Of Imposition of Hands for Ordination, Sec. 25).

But passing on to other points, we should take notice how our Saviour instructs His Apostles, and through them, all future Rulers in the Church, how they are to bear themselves in this important office, and in what way they must be different from the Rulers of this world. The occasion which called forth our Lord's remarks on this head, was when the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons—*i.e.* James and John, two of the three more favoured Disciples—came and besought Jesus that they might have the chief places of honour in His Kingdom. And this, by the way, affords another evidence that in giving the keys to St. Peter awhile before, Christ had not given him the chief place, or put him over the others, and that there was no such impression left in the minds of the Disciples as that he had any pre-eminence among them thereby: else this petition would not have been preferred, or if it had, our Lord would have intimated in some way, that the chief place was already bestowed upon one of them.

Now the request that James and John might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left in His Kingdom, seems to have some reference to the promise of *the twelve thrones* mentioned in the previous chapter: and it is evident that as yet the Disciples had their minds set upon the earthly greatness and glory which they were to share with Christ. But of this Christ disabused their minds. "Ye know not what ye ask," He said. It would be greatness, it would be glory, to

be nearest to Christ in His Kingdom; but these places must be won, in following the Master through shame and suffering. Just previous to the request, our Lord had been foretelling them of His being about to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified; and, as if for the purpose of recalling this to their minds, as well as to shew them the way of attaining the highest places in glory, He asked the two Disciples if they had counted the cost, and were ready and able to endure all things for His sake. And with a holy boldness, they answered "We are able."

It was in what followed the request, however, that words were said which especially bear upon the matter in hand. "When the ten heard it they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." This ambition made them jealous and full of animosity; and it is so still in communities, even in the Church, when any one takes upon himself an authority he does not possess.

Our Lord then proceeded to shew them that their anger was foolish and uncalled for, as it arose from a misconception of the character of His Kingdom, which was wholly different from that of earthly Kingdoms,—as also the way in which it was to be ruled. For when He had called them unto Him, as if with great tenderness,—He said, "Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But *it shall not be so among you.*" (St. Matt. xx, 25, 26.) Christ speaks very decidedly upon this point. He will not have the rulers in His Church to imitate the rulers of

this world, or, like them, to seek mainly after own selfish ends and ambitious aggrandisement; to lord it and tyrannise over all whom they could make subject to Christ. To seek pre-eminence in this fashion was a heathenish passion, which they must avoid, and in no wise attempt, as it was wholly contrary to His Design; and would indeed frustrate the advancement and rule of His Kingdom.

Their ambition must be to exercise true humility, self-denying love, whereby they may serve one another, and serve all who should become the subjects of His Kingdom; and, instead of having an imperious bearing, and trying to rise over the heads of others, their equals, they must in honour prefer one another. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, *let him be your servant.*" This is true greatness, and is such as even the world admires, and loves to honour; and carries with it far more real power, authority, and influence, and especially in the Church, than in seeking after chief places, honours, and dominion over others. After this our Lord proposes His own conduct to them as an example; "Even as the Son of Man," though so great and holy, "came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*," to serve others, "and to give His life a ransom for many." (St. Matt. xx. 28.)

It is plain from all this that our Lord did not design to invest *any one of them with supreme authority over the others*; or ever purposed that St. Peter or any supposed successors of His should ever exercise

any supreme authority in His Church; and, moreover, it is evident from His words that the endeavour to do this would be antagonistic to Christianity—an attempt to graft Paganism into Christ's Kingdom. Earthly ambition, or a desire to take a lead among men, is engrained in the heart of *the natural man*, and the Disciples could not divest themselves of it altogether, even though our Lord had already strongly remonstrated with them about it. Nor do they appear to have rid themselves of this earthly passion, until they saw our Saviour crucified upon the Cross, and the Holy Ghost was given to them.

Some little time after the foregoing instance, when they were at the supper table, and after our Blessed Lord had instituted the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, again "there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (St. Luke xxii. 24.) The idea still runs in their minds that one among them must have supremacy in Christ's Kingdom, as it was in earthly Kingdoms. As to the occasion of this dispute, nothing is mentioned. But it is supposed that the contention arose concerning their taking their several places at the table. Each of them wished to seat himself near the Lord; and the possession of these places which they sought through love of the Saviour, might have caused some reference to higher and lower stations in the Kingdom of Christ; and these hints, although but casually expressed, gave occasion to Christ to inculcate once more upon the Twelve, the doctrine that meekness and self-abase-

ment are the peculiar virtues of the Christian. Much in the same words as He had before addressed to them, Christ said, "The Kings of the Gentiles exercised lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But *ye shall not be so.*" This expression, says a critical writer, has reference to office or station in Christ's Kingdom. Not only shall they not assume the airs of Kings, the pride, arrogancy, and tyranny which they usually display, but none of them shall be kings, having arbitrary rule or government; rule and government they should have, but it must be in conjunction with one another, and not according to their individual humour and will, but in accordance with the will and design of Christ, and for Christ also. Could anything, then, be clearer than this, that Christ hereby forbids any one of them, or any of their successors, to take anything like the position of being a sovereign over the whole Church?

The Constitution of Christ's spiritual Kingdom is, and must be upheld and carried on quite differently to this, not only in the manners they assume towards the brethren, but in the office they hold. Christ is, and must be for ever, King, the one supreme governor,—no one must take His place solely, as His Vicar or deputy, or representative on the earth: for Christ Himself must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet; and this not only for a time in the Church, but unto "*the end*, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." The spirit, then, in which they should undertake the office He appoints them to, should guard

them from falling into such an error, which would be the result of pride, greed, or ambition. Their dominion or advancement over others, to which they were chosen, and which was given to them, must be manifested by greater humility, more devoted service for the good of the members of the Church, and in seeking the salvation of souls by greater zeal, indefatigable labour, and unwearied love. These must be the marks of greatness and distinction among those who are to hold rule in the Church.

Then Christ presents Himself, as He had done on the former occasion, to those whom He selects to rule in the Church for Him, as their pattern to follow. "For whether is greater," He continues, "he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as *He that serveth*." Though the Head of the Church, and the ruler of the world, "He took upon Himself the form of a servant." Therefore in all things, and especially as rulers in the Church, must they try to become like Christ their Master; not eager to grasp the highest place, or seeking to tread under their brethren in office, or those committed to their care, so as to exalt themselves; but being examples of humility and condescension, and of beneficence, tender compassion, usefulness, and unceasing devotion in saving souls; ensamples to the elders among them, wherever their lot was cast.

In the next Chapter, the remainder of the evidence on the will and design of Christ, respecting His Church, will be adduced.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WILL AND DESIGN OF CHRIST CONCLUDED.

I. IN continuing this more substantive kind of evidence, drawn from the Holy Gospels, the next thing to be noticed in the instructions which Christ gives for the government of His Church is, *the order and discipline to be maintained within it*. What is to be done in the case of offences which will not unfrequently arise? This seems to follow naturally after having corrected their earthly notions about the way in which they were to be rulers and judges in His kingdom, viz.: that it should not resemble the character of that exercised in the kingdoms of this world.

The general rule laid down by our blessed Saviour for the correction of offences is, first, to try conciliatory measures, such as will be least likely to hurt or exasperate the offender. The aggrieved party must—before making the matter public, or bringing it to the notice of the authority in the Church—quietly, as a brother, and in private, represent to the offender the error or grievance into which he has fallen, or has committed, and persuade him to alter his course, and act differently. For, saith Christ, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” (St. Matt. xviii. 15.) This may perhaps end the matter, and you will have

cause to rejoice that, without proceeding to harsh or extreme measures at once, you have been made the happy instrument of his repentance.

If, however, the first method does not succeed, another essay must be made: and *the next step* is, to see what can be done with the offender by the help of others; get one or two of the brethren to go with thee and talk the matter over again with him; for our Saviour continues, "If he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." (v. 16.) That is, in order that the offence which you have laid to his charge may be confirmed to him by sufficient testimony, that others besides thyself think him to be wrong; and that he be no longer able to deny it, or consider that it is an imaginary charge, or of frivolous import.

If this fails to convince him of his error or offence, and he be still refractory, either through want of conviction or want of contrition, then *the third step* to be taken is thus set forth in our Saviour's words: "If he neglect to hear them (the one or two others), tell it unto the Church." (v. 17). The matter must then be brought under public cognizance, or referred to the "ordinary" or rulers of the Church, to be dealt with as they think fit, that an admonition from them may peradventure make him sensible of his fault. *And fourthly*, if all these measures fail to have any effect upon him, and he still remains perverse, our Saviour's instructions are conveyed in these words, "But

if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (v 17.) Let him no more be counted as a brother; and consequently he must in due order be banished from the Community or Society, for not conforming to its rules and judgment; as it is usually done in mere secular or temporal societies. And here the matter ends; there is no further appeal.

"These directions," Dr. Hammond says, "represents our Saviour in effect saying, 'These directions that I now give, I require to be used in the Church for ever.'" (On New Test. in loco.) It was in accordance with these directions that St. Paul enjoined Timothy that he was not to receive an accusation against an elder, "but before two or three witnesses, and them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Tim. v. 19, 20.) And it was on the principle of these directions that the LXIVth of the Apostolical Canons was formed, as it will be recollected, which directed that even if a Bishop offended, he was not to be proceeded against until he had been summoned a second time, and even a third time by two Bishops. And this was the course pursued by the General Councils when they had occasion to call any Bishop to account; as the two instances already cited will sufficiently shew. Moreover, it is to be observed that immediately after the above directions given by our Saviour, in the very next verse (18), He intimates that power will be given to "the Twelve," or to the ruling authority in the Church, *to bind and to lose*;

to which passage our attention has been already called. Shewing by this close connexion, that with them and their successors, the Bishops, rested the power eventually to cast offenders out of the Church: assuring all people that their sentences, when justly merited by offenders, will be ratified in Heaven, if the latter do not repent and submit themselves, shewing a desire to be reconciled, and to reform their conduct.

Then, at the same time, as it would appear, our blessed Saviour gave "the Twelve" other particular directions how to proceed in what was necessary to be done, not only as to the exercise of Discipline in the Church, but as to other sacred matters; especially as to the manner in which they should pray for what they needed. For in the very next verse to that on "binding" and "loosing" we have these words of Christ:—"Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (St. Matt. xviii. 19, 20.) Where we perceive that in their special supplications two things are required of them, by which all actions of importance shall at all times be conducted. For there must first be *agreement among them*; and secondly, they must, when they have to decide upon any matter, be *gathered together in His name*. Decisions must not be arbitrarily made, or depend upon the judgment of *any one of them*, nor must they be lightly given, but in accord-

ance with the commission and authority He should give to them, on the principles of His kingdom; and with the consciousness, that when they thus act in His name, He is present with them, to make valid what they do, to sanction and give effect to what they decree.

"It is not needful for you all to be present on the occasion," our Saviour seems to say; "it may not be possible for you all to meet at the time when it is needful for some matter to be attended to and settled; especially when you have to go into all the world to make known the glad tidings of salvation. But this need be no impediment in a few of you who can meet, coming to some decided conclusion on what requires your attention. And the agreement of the two or three will be the more likely to secure your acting in accordance with what has previously been laid down by the whole of you; and, the solemnity of your assembling together *in My name*, should secure your being faithful to Me, and your doing nothing but what is known to be My will and design in founding the Church, of which I have made you rulers."

It may be said that the words have reference to social and public prayer, and to the gracious promises made to encourage Christians to engage in these exercises. It is not necessary to deny or object to this application of the passage; nay, it should be encouraged, for it is included; but from the context we must contend that it has a primary and more direct application to the actions and conduct of the

the Apostles, whom the Saviour was about to appoint for the founding and governing of His Church. And, by deduction, should teach us the great respect that is due *to Councils* when properly assembled, and canonically carried on—when agreement can be fairly obtained, and not enforced by compulsion or undue influence—wherein the Church confers together for the defence of the truth, the arrangement of her work, and the enforcement of discipline.

II. And now observe, that, as the time of His departure draws nigh, Christ proceeds to make *His final arrangements*, and gives plainer and more definite instructions about the ordinances of His Kingdom, and as to what the Apostles must do, to whom He should intrust the momentous work of founding and governing it. In the same night that He was betrayed, Christ instituted the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood: and here notice particularly, that the injunction of our divine Head, “This do in remembrance of me,” (St. Luke xxii. 19) was first given to the Apostles alone, and had special reference as to what they were to do, so that the great sacrifice of our Saviour upon the cross might continually, in the most solemn manner, be kept before the minds of His true followers. As if He had said, “I give it in charge to you as a body, that you see to the due and perpetual administration of this Holy Sacrament; and deal out to my faithful people the bread and wine, in a similar manner as ye have seen me do to you, so that they may keep in memory what I suffered

for them; the bread broken to be a token of my Body crucified, and the wine a token of the Blood I shed for them." Moreover, this was one of those important measures for which the Apostles had to make proper and permanent arrangements; and lay down some definite rule for the future administration of it in the Church for generations to come, by those who should succeed them, and whom they should appoint. It was a command or commission, in the first instance, *to His Apostles to perpetuate this sacred ordinance*, so that it might everywhere, and in all ages, be received by the Lord's people. This is deemed by some of our learned divines in the Church of England to be the chief sense in which the words are to be taken.

For, guided by His reading of the Early Fathers, Bishop Jeremy Taylor says: "This was the first delegation of a perpetual ministry, which Jesus made to his Apostles, in which they were to be succeeded in all ages of the Church. (Life of Christ, Part iii. Sec. xv.) And again, he says: "Here was no manducation expressed, and, therefore, *hoc facite*, concerns the Apostles in the capacity of Ministers; not as receivers, but as conservators and givers." (Divine Inst. of the Office Min. sec. v.) And Dr. Henry Hammond, in his *Practical Catechism*, when he asks, "What is the full importance of them?" replies: "*It is first a Commission given to the Apostles*, to continue this ceremony or Sacrament in the Church for ever. Secondly, a direction for the manner of observing it: they should

do to other Christians as He had done to them, *i.e.*, take, bless, break this bread, take and bless this cup, and then give and distribute it to others; settling this on them as part of their office, a branch of that power left by Him, and by them communicable to whom they should think fit." (Lib. vi. sec. iv.) Still we must not lose sight of the other view, that the Holy Sacrament being offered to the faithful by duly appointed ministers, it became tantamount to a rejection, or at least to a neglect or forgetfulness of Christ's dying injunction, if they did not severally come and accept this Holy Sacrament, and *this do in remembrance of Christ*; receive it from the hands of His duly commissioned servants, as the Apostles had received it from the hands of their Lord; and therein renew their pledge of devotion to Christ; so that thereby, also, their souls may be strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, as their bodies are by bread and wine.

And in the administration of the other—the initiatory—Sacrament of Baptism, the injunction of our Lord was given just before His Ascension *to the Apostles alone*, and not to all the people, or to His Disciples generally, as He spake to them respecting other matters, on many occasions when they gathered round Him. There were none with Jesus but "the Eleven" on this occasion; they had met Him by appointment on one of the Galilean Mountains after His resurrection, when He said unto them, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost." (St. Matt. xxviii. 19.) Christ had many other Disciples; He had selected seventy others in addition to the Twelve, five hundred brethren together saw Him on one occasion after His resurrection from the dead: but to none of these other than the Apostles, did our Lord directly give the commission. It was given only to the Apostles, that through them solely the authority for administering Baptism should come. Hence it became part of their high commission to agree among themselves, and permanently settle some rules in the Constitution of the Church, as to whom, and by what means, they should ordain others to help them. No doubt most, if not all, of the Seventy were appointed to administer Baptism, and the Holy Communion to others, but *the authority came directly through the Apostles*; and, in the way they had appointed, as most agreeable to the instructions they had themselves received from Christ. Thus Christ honoured them above all others, and gave all power into their hands, so that all true Christians, in all ages, and in all parts should abide by the Constitution of the Church, which together the Apostles originally determined upon. And it is especially to be noticed that the injunction "Go ye," &c., follows immediately upon the words of Jesus, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and on earth." As much as if He had said, "I have in Myself the divine right and power to appoint whom I will to build My Church, and do all that is necessary; and the solemn commission I now give you, shall be your credentials, and a sufficient warrant, that you are authorized to act for Me, and in My name."

If we have regard to Christ's appointment, and to the Constitution of the Church, as laid down by the Apostles, it must be evident that the injunction does not give authority to any Christian, however able or good he may be, to baptize; it is limited to those who are lawfully appointed in the Church according to the rules laid down by the founders of the Church. Nor from the nature of the case would it seem desirable that it should be otherwise; for viewing the Church as a spiritual Society, constituted for a high and heavenly end, it would not be for its welfare, or right, and in accordance with Christ's will that *any one* should admit, or make other people, members of it, who liked or chose to do so. It seems on the face of it needful, that properly qualified and duly appointed officers should be ordained to confer this privilege, after all necessary preparation and examination as to the fitness of the applicants for membership. This is the course that would recommend itself to plain sensible men. And it is the course that the Apostles decided to adopt: Hence arose the Christian ministry; and the necessity of it becomes apparent. The Church was the garden of the Lord, enclosed and marked off from the world, where special blessings and benefits were to be had, for those who were rightly permitted to enter and partake of them: there must therefore be officers duly appointed in every part to properly administer its sacred rites. Christ Himself compares His Church to a sheep fold, a place of safety, where His people may be cared for, and protected, and go in and out and find pasture under

the shepherd's eye. And speaking of Himself, too, as *the door* of the sheep, He intimates that no one can enter in but through Him—those He has appointed, and the means He has ordained ; and so it is, that through baptism in His name we alone can be received ; and the porters or door keepers that are to open the door to us, are the appointed ministers of God's Holy Word and Sacraments. For 'as none can be admitted but through Christ, so none can be keepers of the door, with authority to admit, but those to whom He has given in charge the door into the Church.

The principle of ministerial administration in the Church is beautifully and clearly set forth in the two miracles of our divine Saviour when He miraculously fed large multitudes in the wilderness from very little food. The one is recorded in St. Matthew xiv, and the other in the following Chapter. In both cases Christ did not directly feed the people with His own hands, but gave the food to them *through the agency of those whom He designated to do this*. He "gave the loaves to His Disciples and the Disciples to the multitude." But though Christ did not give the food to the people with His own hands, yet all recognized the fact, that it was Jesus, and none other, who had miraculously fed them with the loaves and fishes. Those whom He employed were but His ministers, through whom He fed the people.

And so in the Sacraments of Christ's Church, He has appointed certain persons to administer them ; and what is done through them and those who are appointed

to act for them, according to the system in the Church, which was laid down at the beginning, is to be accounted as done by Christ Himself. This agency or system of administration does not obstruct or lessen the value of what is done, and of what Christ gives or conveys thereby. It is the means designed by Christ for imparting His blessings to those who truly come to Him by faith; and the appointment of this order of administration, is to assure those who come that they rightly receive the benefits Christ would impart to their souls, and that they receive them in all the fulness of their virtue. If there is any failure, it is not in the ordinance, or in the system of administration, it is in the individuals who come; there is some fault in themselves whereby they do not receive the inward and spiritual grace designed to be given through the outward and visible means.

As Christ found it necessary to appoint others, so it came to pass that when the Apostles whom He appointed felt that they were not sufficient for the work Christ had commissioned them to do, they not only called and appointed others to come to their help, but in the carrying out of Christ's design, they laid down a system for the appointment of others that should come after them as a perpetual ordinance in the Church. And it is through this system founded by Christ and His Apostles, that we have at the present day an agency for ministerial administration which Christ Himself has ordained, and originated through His Apostles. When the ministers of Christ then baptize in His name, it is as if Christ Himself,

through them, admitted those who come, into His Church; for remember He is the Door; and when they administer the Bread and Wine in the other Sacrament, it is as if Christ Himself was, through their hands, giving His Body and Blood for the strengthening and refreshing of the souls of the faithful recipients.

The ordinance of *Preaching* also was included in the Commission Christ gave to His Apostles, it was *to them alone*, just before His Ascension, that He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (St. Mark xvi. 15.) Hence all authority to preach, and offer the terms of salvation and remission of sin to those who repent, must come through them, and through the ordinance which they established for supplying the Church with properly ordained ministers, committing the same authority which they had received "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." And it is very necessary to grasp the great importance of what Christ did in giving this authority to, and through, the Apostles whom He had chosen; that in His Church there might be but *one system and one authority*, as coming from Christ Himself, everywhere, and at all times, appointing and keeping up the ministry of reconciliation." For St. Paul says, "*All things are of God*, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and *hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation*; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and *hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.*"

Mark how the Apostle seems to emphasize the fact, that the authority of preaching the Gospel in its real power and effect is intrusted to certain persons duly appointed by those who have a right to impart this authority. For, continues the Apostle, "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" (2 Cor. v. 18-20.) And the value of this order of things, which proceeds originally from Christ, is that the channel for conveying this authority being one and the same in all times and places so long as the Church lasts, and not derived from many sources, there might be something like order, and peace, and unity preserved. And it is in the not being careful and particular in attending to the design of Christ, that so much strife and confusion is prevalent among Christians, and whereby the Church presents such a torn-asunder appearance to the world.

In one sense every Christian—every member of the Church, must by every means in his power make Christ and His salvation known to others who are ignorant or destitute of it; indeed, if such really know the great saving value of their religion in Christ they will necessarily feel constrained to do this; but then, this is very different from acting officially as the ordained ministers of Christ. And it is both interesting and significant to observe that when the sacred writer in the Acts of the Apostles tells us that "they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere *preaching* the word," he uses a different word in the original .

Greek from what he does in the verse following, where he adds, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and *preached* Christ unto them." (Acts viii. 4, 5.) In the former the more express meaning of the word is, that they spread the news of the glad tidings of salvation, told others of it (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι); in the latter instance it is to declare officially, or make known Christ with authority (ἐκήρυσσαν). And it is satisfactory to notice that in the revised version, a difference in the rendering is made, and that in the latter case it is translated, Phillip "proclaimed Christ unto them;" the reason apparently being that Philip, having been ordained, *preached with authority*.

Prior to this great commission given to the Apostles, it should be noticed that Christ had solemnly consecrated them, and in a very significant manner set them apart to a higher office in the ministry. They had already been ordained, and been sent forth to preach in His name; this latter act of Christ's must therefore signify their being raised to another position which they had not held before. So long as Christ was with them, He retained all authority, and directed all things according to His own will; but now that His bodily presence would shortly be withdrawn from the earth, it is time for Him—nay, the full time was come, if ever, when Christ should intrust the exercise of His authority to others, to those whom he should appoint to act for Him, and be His representatives; so that there might be those in His kingdom to whom His people might look for direction; those who should be chiefs; and

not only to carry out His instructions and design, but to have the charge and government of His Church also. Some intimation of this He had given to "the Twelve" shortly before His death, when He had said unto them, "The Son of Man, is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." (St. Mark xiii. 34.) And again, when He had said unto them; "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." (St. Luke xxii. 28, 29.)

Our blessed Lord had evidently been looking forward to this, and preparing men that He had previously selected and specially trained, by having them constantly with Him; that they might learn His will, and what He purposed with regard to His Church. For three years Christ had been getting ready for the building of it; and for most of the time His disciples had been cognizant of His having a design for it: His thoughts must have been engaged about it even when He stood alone at the first: for more than two years "the Twelve" had been His constant companions; and for the greater part of this time they had assisted Him in His ministry, after being solemnly ordained by Him; and latterly He had prepared their minds for their taking a much higher and more commanding position than they had hitherto occupied, when He plainly said unto them, in words already alluded to, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Christ had kept

His design steadily before Him all along, and had not neglected anything that was necessary for it. It was not a sudden conclusion He had come to, as if He had acted on impulse; but now He proceeded to the Consecration of the Apostles after mature deliberation, carrying out the scheme for the government of His Church that had long been in His mind, after He had taken much pains, and got all things ready for it.

And then observe the important and significant words, which our Lord uttered, when the solemn act of their consecration took place, "As my Father hath sent Me, so send I you." I shall shortly take my leave of you, but I now hand on to you the authority and commission in the Church, which My Father gave unto Me, for you to exercise when I am gone. And mark the still more significant *action* of the Consecration itself. "He breathed on them," as if He would infuse into them something of His very life and power for the execution of their exalted office, "And saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Hereby receive power from on high for the proper and efficient discharge of the duties incumbent upon you. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained unto them." (St. John xx. 21-23.)

It is difficult to conceive by what more expressive words and actions than these Christ could have consecrated them to their high office as rulers of the Church in His stead. As the Apostles listened to the

words and saw and felt Him solemnly breathing upon them from His resurrection body, they must have become deeply impressed with the conviction that they were to act and speak with authority in His Name.

But it should be noticed, by the way, that since Christ was made "an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, seeing that He *ever liveth* to make intercession for us;" and that, as "the Son," "He is consecrated for evermore;" (Heb. vi. 20; vii. 25, 28.) there was no need, nor is it fitting, that He should be represented by any single individual on earth; lest it should in some way interfere with, or overshadow, His being *the one* only, and ever living Head of His Church. And therefore we find *in fact* that Christ *did purposely* NOT appoint any one alone to represent Him, or to have supreme rule or authority in His Church, but a *small body* of those whom He had called *Apostles*, and whom He consecrated to be chief rulers together.

It is clear that St. Peter, after Christ's departure, did not consider that he alone had supreme authority in the Church, or was placed over the other Apostles; nor, did they; or why is it that we never hear afterwards of his exercising any one act of jurisdiction over them; though he on several occasions at the first took the lead? And, how is it that we never hear of *their ever* acknowledging St. Peter as having supreme authority in the Church, or, of their ever being subject to him? Is he not rather subject to the other Apostles in their corporate capacity?

Besides, if Christ had designed that He should hereafter be represented by one individual in His Church, or that all power and authority from Him should come through one person only, why did He give this power and authority *to all* the Apostles before He left them? Why did He plainly tell them that they should sit on *twelve* thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Why did our Saviour so expressly say *to the Apostles in a body*, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you?" Such language as this from our Saviour's lips would only have tended to confuse and mislead the Apostles, and others after them, if it had ever been the intention of Christ, or part of His design, that *any one person* should hereafter succeed Him as the head over all the Church on earth! Surely, then, our Blessed Lord meant them clearly to understand, that *He alone should be always, and for ever, the one only acknowledged Head*; but that under Him the company or college of the Apostles should carry out His designs and instructions; to whom also as we have just seen, He gave power and authority to govern the Church, after the pattern showed to them, upon one uniform system that should be agreed upon by them all together.

And that the system or form of Church government which they inaugurated, should continue throughout all generations, and be expanded as the growing needs of the Church should require, our Saviour plainly intimated when He said to the Apostolic body, just before leaving them, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Meaning, that He

Himself should still be the living and only supreme Head of the Church; and that He through His Divine power would be present with their successors, whom they should appoint and send forth to carry on the work, as Christ had appointed and sent them. In this way He would fulfil this promise.

And here it seems desirable to consider a little more attentively another most important matter, arising from the words of Christ in the consecration of the Apostles to rule in His Church, as having a deep bearing on true Christian unity; and that is, *the principle of succession in the Christian ministry, or the power of ordination*. When Christ said, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," we have the germ, or root-principle of Christ's ministry, which was to be of perpetual obligation, viz., That none can rightly minister in His Church or Kingdom, but those who have authority given to them in a lawful way—none but those who are properly or validly *sent*, that is, by those who are duly commissioned to send. The author of this rule or ordinance in the Church, is none other than God Himself. The principle of the action comes from Him, and it is the more needful to give some attention to it. Under the Jewish polity everything was settled according to the pattern shewed to Moses in the Mount; and among these the ordering of its priesthood and its succession; these were by God's appointment; and He shewed His just indignation and wrath in punishing those that rejected it, or attempted to set it aside, and adopt some other

ministry as equal to it. And as God is not given to change, the same principle on which things were ordered under the Jewish dispensation, is the same which is ordained for the Christian ministry; those only are to be acknowledged as ministers who are appointed or ordained by those only who have already the authority in the Church to ordain or send forth ministers. And it will easily be perceived how important this principle is *for the preservation of unity*; the stream is one; it is the *only one* that comes from the source or head; and to create or acknowledge another would but be the source of division and disunity. If unity is to be preserved in the Church, however extended and perpetuated, it must be by one, and the same authority that has come down from the beginning, and has been established by Divine commission.

And it should be observed that Christ Himself laid great stress upon this point, that *He Himself had been commissioned by God the Father*; and that He was duly qualified to send them (the Apostles), as they would be to send others in His name. Though the great Head of the Church, Christ is very particular in pointing out, that *He came not without being sent*—He took not upon Himself His great mission, but by the express will of the Father, and the manifest consecration which He received from Heaven. Perhaps sufficient attention has not been given to this view of Christ's ministry, or we should not now witness such an utter disorganization among Christians, arising from an entire disregard to all rule or authority,

even so much so as to deny that there is any such authority in the Church. But the true followers of Christ will not be so indifferent about the matter; and will all the more pay a due deference to it, when they notice how constantly and impressively Christ refers to it in His Gospel; evidently making it *a principle of action* in His Gospel scheme, in relation to the future of His Church. It was not only on the occasion when He finally commissioned the Apostles to go forth in His name to all nations, or when He had previously sent "the Twelve" or "the Seventy" on a temporary mission, that He alluded to His having been sent. He especially and repeatedly brought it to the notice of those that flocked around Him, to hear the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, in the earlier part of His ministry, that men might be assured that He was indeed a Teacher *sent* from God to them.

When the Jews sought to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, as they had supposed, by healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, "but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God;" He defended Himself by saying, among other things, "I seek not mine own will, but *the will of Him that sent me.*" (St. John v. 30.) "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." And after alluding to the testimony which John the Baptist bore of Him, He again said, "But I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same

works that I do, bear witness of Me, that *the Father hath sent Me*. And *the Father Himself which hath sent Me*, hath borne witness of Me." (Verses 36, 37.) And in the next verse He plainly told them, that the word of God did not abide in them, "for *whom He hath sent*, Him ye believe not;" and further on, "*I am come in my Father's name*, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye receive." (Verse 43.) *i.e.*, one not properly *sent*.

Again, after the feeding of the Five Thousand, when the people asked Jesus, "What shall we do?" He replied, "This is the work of God, *that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent*." (St. John vi. 29.) And conversing with them further about the Bread of life, He said, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of *Him that sent me*. And this is the Father's will which *hath sent me*," &c. "And this is the will of *Him that sent me*," &c. (Verses 38, 39, 40.) And notice how prominently our Saviour keeps this one point before the people. For after awhile He says to them, "No man can come to me, except the *Father which hath sent me* draw him." (Verse 44.) And, "As the *living Father hath sent me*, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (Verse 57.)

On another occasion, when Jesus went up from Galilee to Jerusalem, to the feast of Tabernacles, He spake boldly to the Jews, and cried in the Temple as He taught, saying "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and *I am not come of myself*, but

He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him: *for I am from Him*, and *He hath sent me.*" (St. John vii. 28, 29.) Many of the people believed on Him at this time; but some of the Jews sought to take Him, but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.

After this, when again speaking in the treasury of the Temple, shortly after the account of the woman taken in adultery, Jesus said, "My judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and *the Father that sent me*. It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and *the Father that sent me* beareth witness of me." (St. John viii. 16—18). And in speaking again to the Jews, He said, "I have many things to say and judge of you: but *He that sent me* is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." (v. 26.) "I do nothing of myself: but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And *He that sent me*, is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (Verses 28, 29.) And once more, He plainly said to them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for *I proceedeth forth from God*, and *came from God: neither came I of myself, but He sent me*" (v. 42.)

It is necessary to bring this point largely out to view, that it may be fully recognised as an essential part of the Gospel message; and that it is so essential a principle that Christ Himself would not speak the word of God, would not engage in His ministry

without being divinely appointed, without constantly certifying, that *He had been sent by God the Father*. And may it not be said, what an example He sets to all those who would be His ministers, to those who would speak authoritatively in His name!—that they should not take upon themselves Christ's ministry, unless they had been *properly sent, i.e., sent by those who have authority in Christ's Church to send*—the authority which has come down from the Apostles, whom Christ solemnly appointed *and sent, as He had been by the Father*.

And this is the very point of the argument in the ministry of Christ, which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews enforces, when he says:—"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but He *that is called of God, as was Aaron*." (v. 4.) Now the Jews were fully assured that Aaron was called of God, and that his successors had a just right from him to engage in the ministry of priesthood. It is an act of Sovereignty in God to call and appoint whom He will; and none but those of Aaron's line or succession were permitted to minister before God; God Himself marked His disapproval and judgment against those who presumed to take this office upon themselves, though on one occasion they were supported by "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." And so, if we read the Scriptures aright, none are justified in acting as the ministers of Christ, but they who are duly appointed by those *whom He appointed and sent*, as the head or beginning

of another succession of ministers deriving their authority from Him.

For, observe how the Apostle applies the above words to Christ and His ministry, when he adds, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee. As He saith in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (v. 5, 6.)

Thus was Christ undoubtedly *called and sent of God*, as was Aaron; but in a more glorious and more direct manner: and as one that far excelled Aaron: "for this man (Christ Jesus) was counted worthy of more honour than Moses, inasmuch as He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." Moses was appointed "*as a servant*," "but Christ as *a Son over His own house*; whose house are we." And if the Lord of the Church Himself, who might have taken the honour on Himself, yet did not do so *uncalled*, how much more should not they of His household—those who are to act as ambassadors of His Kingdom, and who profess to speak in His name. To go forth uncalled or not sent by the authority which Christ has instituted in His Church is, to say the least, presumptuous, and not according to the Gospel of Christ.

There is a great need still—a pressing need—of men to preach the Gospel; and it is a special dignity and sacred office to *be called thereto*, as well as to be qualified for the work and service of God; but the great necessity of the work, or its excellency, will by no means

warrant our undertaking it, and engaging in it, without a lawful call to it. Every one, then, who professes to be a preacher of the Gospel and a minister of Jesus Christ, should look well to his credentials, and not be satisfied until he is assured that he has been rightly called to the work, however much he may think himself qualified, inwardly called, or fitted for it. It is not any kind of call that will do ; it is not any kind of minister or number of ministers that can appoint or *send forth* men in Christ's ministry. A call from the people, or from a congregation, is not sufficient ; any zealous minister, or number of ministers, cannot *send* men, if they have not got authority to do this, according to the institution and design of Christ and His Apostles. Much less must any one think that his zeal for and devotion to Christ, is a sufficient warrant to speak authoritatively as a minister of Christ. This is not the Gospel way, whereby everything must "be done decently and in order ;" while there are many other ways in which the zeal and devotion of those who are not rightly called, may be expended in Christ's behalf.

Who does not remember St. Paul's interrogatives as to the mode in which the Holy Spirit would propagate the Gospel, the concluding question of which is, "And how shall they preach *except they be sent* !" (Rom. x. 15.) As much as to say, such a thing is not to be allowed, not to be thought of, that a man should preach authoritatively as a minister unless he be *rightly sent*. An ambassador can only speak authoritatively, when he comes with a duly authenticated warrant from his

Sovereign; it is not every one who thinks he has ability for this, or sees the necessity of it, that has the right to speak and act for his Sovereign; and so it is in the Church of Christ. The comment of Olshausen, a celebrated German divine, on these words, are well worthy of being considered. "The proper development of Christianity among mankind," he says, "cannot be produced by some immediate operation of the Spirit, scattered as seed here and there, but in order to its propagation, there is constantly required an imparting from the centre of the Church. The Church of Christ partakes in the nature of every self-contained organization, which cannot develop itself save on the condition that all the members remain in connexion with the whole. Not only is it impossible that a community of Christians should come into existence without connexion with the whole body of the Church, without having the history of Christ preached to it; but, moreover, without this living connexion, it cannot subsist for a length of time without changing its nature—as is proved by the history of the Ethiopian Church. This is to be accounted for, first, from the *historical* character of Christianity, which essentially rests on the *facts* of the history of Jesus; and next, from the Spirit, which is the power which operates in preaching. This principle is connected with the Person of Jesus (St. John vii. 39, the flowing of rivers of living water from Him through the Holy Spirit), and is diffused from Him in continuous operation."

And then speaking of *the order of things* as an essential property of the Church, and of the charge

given by Christ which makes it of force till the end of time ; Olshausen continues, "First of all, evidently ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, He Himself, the Lord of the Church, sends forth all the messengers, and by His Spirit arouses them for His service. But that the order of the visible Church may be preserved, this inward calling requires the addition of an *outward sanction* ; therefore the inward call must have recourse to the constituted ecclesiastical authorities, in order that it may be able, through their confirmation and recognition, to co-operate in a regular manner towards the edification of the Church. An opposite course would introduce a tumultuary and separatistic manner of working, in which all superintendence of teachers, and consequently, all prevention of enthusiastic and fanatical efforts, must become impossible. St. Paul, who was called from the world in the most immediate manner, nevertheless, by his example, most strikingly confirms the reality and necessity of this mutual operation with the established organs of the Church. Although baptized with the Spirit by the Lord Himself, he yet receives baptism from Ananias at Damascus (Acts ix, 19) ; and, although expressly set apart by the Lord for the ministry of the Gentiles, he yet does not formally enter upon his ministry among them, *until the Church of Antioch*, (by the special and immediate direction of the Holy Spirit,) chooses him, and *sends him forth* as a messenger to the Gentiles. (Ch. xiii.) The subordination of the individual to the needs and regulations of the whole body, *is a necessary condition of the Church's*

developing itself with a blessing." More of this will be seen when we consider the several acts of the Apostles and their words as recorded after Christ's departure.

It may not be out of place, however, if I here relate what is said by the Rev. H. Newland, about the great Jewish missionary, Dr. Woolf, who went in search of two English officers that were murdered at Bokhara, many years ago. Burning with zeal to preach the Gospel of Christ, he was on one occasion travelling in some out of the way place in the far East. It was in the Diocese of one of the Bishops of the Eastern Church; and in the course of his wandering he fell in with the Bishop.

"Who are you?" said the Bishop, looking at him rather suspiciously.

"A poor missionary;" said the Doctor.

"A what?" asked the Bishop.

"A missionary," repeated Dr. Woolf, pulling out his little black Bible. And those of us who are old enough to have seen Woolf fingering his Bible, will remember how it seemed always to open of itself at the precise text he wanted. "I am come to preach salvation to these people. 'How shall they call on Him of whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? Or how shall they hear without a preacher?'"

"That is all very well:" said the Bishop, "but why don't you finish the text? 'How shall they preach *except they be sent?*' (Rom. x., 14, 15.) *Who sent you?*"

“Sent?” said Woolf.

“Yes; Sent!” replied the Bishop. “My Metropolitan sent me, and His predecessors sent him, and I send my priests and deacons. Now, who sent you?”

“The Spirit of the Lord;” said Woolf boldly: for he was not a man to be put out of countenance. I hope you do not deny that Christ is able to send His own messenger without human intervention?”

“God forbid that I should doubt it for a moment,” the Bishop answered: “I know He can. I know that He sent Moses and Aaron without human intervention, to establish the Aaronic priesthood: and I know that He superseded this very priesthood of His own ordination, by sending also without human intervention the Apostolic priesthood; and what He did once He can do again. God forbid! that I should doubt that; I should be a Jew if I did. Still, I do observe, that whenever God does send any one direct from Himself and without human intervention, He is always graciously pleased to confirm His own appointment to the minds of His faithful servants by signs and wonders.

“Moses called down bread from heaven. He and Aaron brought forth water from the rock. And so also when God was pleased to supersede that priesthood, many wonders and signs were wrought by the hands of the Apostles. They did not go upon their own testimony; but appealed to these as witnesses; as in the case of their Master Himself, the works which they did testified of them. Now,” continued the Bishop, “without at all doubting the possibility that a Woolfish succession may

be commissioned to supersede that of the Apostles, where are your witnesses? I suppose you do not expect us to take *your word for it*. What supernatural powers do you appeal to, in proof of your heavenly mission?

“This was a puzzling question. It had puzzled Mahomet several hundred years before. That false prophet, however, got out of it cleverly, by saying, that he had written the Koran, which, as every one thought, was a miracle of itself; but poor Woolf could not say that he had written the Bible; so he fell a thinking. The result was, that he came home, I will not say a better man—for a most excellent man he always was—but by many shades a wiser man;” and soon afterwards sought for ordination in the regular way, from those who had authority in the Church.

Now, if this kind of interlocation were carried on with many of those who profess to be ministers of Christ in the present day, what a strange revelation it would unfold to us. It would run in somewhat like this fashion. “I was ordained or sent by this or that body of ministers; or the people called me to be their minister, and I got the ministers of the body of Christians to which I belong, to ordain me.” But proceed with the inquiry a little further, how, or whence, did these several ministers in the various religious bodies, who have not Bishops, get their authority to ordain? The Presbyterians will for the most part trace up their succession to the godly John Knox. The Independents or Congregationalists to Robert Brown. The Wesleyans to John Wesley. But had John

Knox, or Robert Brown, or John Wesley, or those who associated with them, any authority given them in the Church, to ordain ministers, and to *send forth men* to preach the Gospel? They were doubtless godly and devoted men, full of zeal, living in the midst of much corruption, and burning to make known the truth, and to raise up faithful followers to Christ. Still the question presents itself, were they justified in doing that, for which they had no authority? In giving that, which they had no power to give by the Gospel of Christ—Ordination? A man cannot give, as we all know, what he has not got. Or suppose, it be advanced—that the necessities of those times required some extraordinary effort, gave a certain amount of liberty to deviate from the Apostolic ordinance, was it right, was it justifiable on any Gospel principle, *to continue these deviations beyond the necessities of the times?* Would not this bring in a number of successions, and thus introduce confusion and disorder into the Church of Christ? Would not the introduction of any other succession of ministers than that of the Apostles, lead continually to the setting aside Apostolic order, to constant opposition and contention, and to the misleading of vast numbers? This could not be right; this kind of ordination of ministers cannot be justified.

Length of time does not efface or correct the error, or make it right, or can justify it, if continued in: the evil of it only becomes the more apparent and aggravated by the multiplication of divisions and dissensions. A chain, however many links may be added, does not

become trustworthy to hold by, unless it be properly attached to the links that go before; and, as regards the ministry, to the links which can be traced up to Divine appointment. When any one strays from the main road, and gets into a wrong way that diverges from it, he is not likely, by continuing in the new path he has chosen, to get at length into the right path, but will only be the further from it; and it is only by at last acknowledging his error, consulting his chart afresh, if he has one, and turning back again as quickly as he can, that he will find the right path—though he may have some trouble, and feel much annoyance at having gone wrong. And in religion there is nothing for it, in such a case, but to make a good effort to do this; unless a man becomes reckless or indifferent about his being right and following the truth; and, in perverse foolishness, still sticks to the wrong path he has chosen. It is only by the grace of God alone, and being guided purely by Him that they who have gone out of the way, religious though they be, must hope to get right before the end comes.

There now remain only a few particulars to complete the evidence concerning the will and design of Christ, which shall be briefly noticed. St. Luke, just before closing his Gospel, alluded to one of these; it was a special direction given by our Divine Redeemer to the Apostles, after this form, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (xxiv. 49.) If He had not given them this commandment, as it is called, they would otherwise most naturally have been inclined to leave Jerusalem

at once, since it was the place where the Jews had conspired together against Jesus and put Him to death; and they could only remain there in fear of their own lives. Besides which, Jesus had bid them to "go and teach all nations;" and they might have supposed that it was their duty to go forth on this great mission without delay, had He not instructed them otherwise.

St. Luke takes up this point in the beginning of his Acts of the Apostles, alluding to "the commandments" which Christ had, "through the Holy Ghost, given," just before His Ascension, "to the Apostles whom He had chosen"; and puts it in this form, bidding them "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me." (i. 4.) There was a gift for them to receive, worth waiting for. They were to *wait in faith*, that Christ's word would be fulfilled. It was to be a peculiar time of high expectation, and ardent longing for the coming of the Holy Comforter.

If they had gone forth at once, as if there were nothing now to wait for, and been dispersed, *the unity* of Christ's Church, or Kingdom—of which they themselves were to be the first foundation stones, laid and compacted together, as the nucleus of this great spiritual Society—would not have been manifested, or so well known and ratified at the beginning while in embryo. For it was evidently part of Christ's design that the Apostles should receive the Holy Ghost *as one body*,

and not as so many separated individuals, who had no connection or bond with one another; and that they should all alike, and at the same time, be baptized by the one Holy Spirit.

And observe, Christ informs them of two things. First, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost *not many days hence*," (v. 5,) so that they would not have long to wait. And secondly, "Ye shall *receive power, after that the Holy Ghost shall come upon you*," (v. 8.) Thus they would from the very beginning be fully equipped and strengthened for their great work—with power from on high, so that they would not have to labour in their own unaided powers. Thus they would go forth, as they afterwards evidently felt that they did, "strong in the Lord, in the power of His might." Hence St. Paul assures us, "*We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of power may be of God, and not of us.*" And then, when the Apostles received this power, and not till then, were they to become "witnesses" of Christ, and begin to preach, according to the order Christ gave them.

For it should be noticed—and it is the last particular to be brought forward, that Christ marked out for the Apostles a certain order of proceeding in the universal sphere of labour that He gave them, when in the great commission to the Apostles, He bid them, "Go ye *into all the world*, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Here there is no limit; but still from another passage we learn that a methodic course of action was traced out for them by our Lord: for

He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) Here the places are evidently meant to be taken in order; for though the command comprehends the *Samaritan* and the utmost parts of the earth; yet it is still to *the Jews* that they must *first* preach the Gospel, and Jerusalem must be their starting place.

And there is evidently more in this order than a casual reader might imagine, for it is to be observed that the Apostles are particular in following the instructions of our Lord here put down, and refer to it as that which Christ had designed. "Unto you *first*" says St. Peter to the Jews at Jerusalem, "God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquity." (Acts iii. 26.) And this the Apostle brings to their notice the more to incline them to receive the Gospel, because, though all the families of the Earth are to be blessed in Jesus, yet must they regard themselves as privileged in that God would have the offer to be made *first* to them. And it was not until the Jews reject this offer, and are ready to stone them, that they leave them to a certain extent, and go to the Gentiles; and they are driven by this to carry out Christ's directions in a further degree. Thus when *the Jews* opposed Paul and Barnabas, contradicting and blaspheming, these Apostles "waxed bold, and said it was *necessary* that the word of God *should first* have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you . . . lo, we

turn to the Gentiles : for so hath the Lord commanded us." (Acts xiii. 45-47.) It was the precept of Christ that made it necessary both in the one case and in the other.

Other illustrations of the observance of this rule might be noticed in the labours of St. Paul, did space permit ; but it is important to notice that in the unlimited sphere of work which Christ gave to the Apostles, He is at some pains and care to mark out the steps or places whither they shall go in order, and what they shall do as occasion shall call for any new departure. Hence Christ seems to have neglected nothing that was of moment : but had been most particular, even to giving them details of the way in which they were to accomplish the work before them ; so that they might know at once how to proceed.

Further, these directions of our Lord seem to form only a part of the instructions which Christ gave to His Apostles. There were, evidently, many other things which He said to them respecting His Church, which are not named, for the sacred writer, when informing us of Christ "being seen of them forty days" before His Ascension, adds, that He was engaged during this period in "*speaking* of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (Acts i. 3.) Hence, one is led to believe that in many things which the Apostles did in settling the foundation of the Church, and giving to it a constitution for the future, as well as regarding the order for preaching, they acted according to Christ's instructions to them ; though in all cases it is not plainly so mentioned.

But from what is said—from those various directions and intimations which are given to us, there is ample proof, we contend, to confirm what has been before advanced—that our Lord did give much thought and attention to the building of His Church ; did give to His Apostles, whom He commissioned, all necessary instructions as to what they were to do, and how they were to prosecute His design : hence there is sufficient evidence that He did not leave things to chance or haphazard ; did not leave His affairs to the zeal or enthusiastic conceit of any of His followers ; but that He sufficiently marked out to His Apostles a definite course for them to take, what kind of a system they were to set in motion, and how the Church was to be ordered so that *unity and order might prevail in the future and everywhere.*

We may not see in the Gospels the Church of Christ fully displayed, or be able to distinguish the exact lines of its foundation, for it was not yet laid ; but from the directions, intimations, and illustrations respecting it, as well as from the announcement that He would build His Church, there is enough to show us that our Lord had formed in His own mind some definite idea of what the Church was to be, that He had some well conceived plan or system which He earnestly wished to have carried out ; and that, as far as possible, and as much as was needful, He had explained to, and arranged matters with, the Apostles whom He had chosen, so that nothing should be wanting on His part. Is there not, I would ask,

at least some evidence of this? Evidence enough to guide us? And so, in the allusions to it, and the commandments *He gave* respecting the course His master builders were to take, we can at least see the germ, the tracing, or design of the Church, drawn by Him: that its life and growth were to be in, and from Him; and that one of the chief elements and objects of it was, that He might gather together His elect in one communion and fellowship in His mystical body the Church, and thus establish a permanent basis for the unity of all true Christians. Is there not, at least, a high degree of probability that this was the case, sufficient to guide all reasonable Christians?

It is, however, in what the Apostles of Christ said and did, that we must look for the fuller development and comprehension of the Church: for it was not only to be established, but unfolded and made known through them also. They were intrusted to mark out, and more distinctly depict, set forth, and lay out the lines on which the Church was to be built, in accordance with the instructions Christ had given them; and by agreement among themselves, before they separated, also, to determine and fix upon some certain constitution for its future order, unity, and the agreement of its several members and parts, and its further development. And this they were to do with all power and authority, but not until "the Holy Ghost should come upon them."

And in now turning to consider more particularly the words and actions of the Apostles in the other books of the New Testament, respecting the formation,

the character, and early growth of the Church, let us carry with us, as the Apostles did in their minds, the parting words of Jesus to them, with which St. Matthew closes his Gospel, and which Christ appended to the solemn commission He gave to His Apostles, to which some reference has been already made: "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Which is as much as to say, "I will be with you while you live, continually guiding you aright, and helping you by My Spirit, in what you say, and have to do, for Me: and, when you die, I will be with those whom you may appoint to succeed you to govern the Church for Me in your place, and to carry on its ministrations, according to the rules and ordinances you lay down, as I have told you,—not only in appointing other rulers to act for Me, but in doing the work of the ministry: and thus My presence shall be with you in the Church you shall have begun in My name, for all generations." For, how otherwise could Christ "be with them alway, even unto the end of the world," if it were not in the persons of their successors, who had to carry on the same great work to which He had solemnly appointed them at the beginning?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT JERUSALEM, AS CONSTITUTED BY THE APOSTLES.

THE Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles contain sufficient fragmentary and documentary evidence to confirm and illucidate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ respecting His Church. These sacred writings not only completely support the view that Christ had a design for building His Church, and that He had given ample instructions about the construction of it to the Apostles, whom He had chosen, and solemnly consecrated to have the charge and superintendence of it; but we hear of their beginning the work, laying the foundation, carrying it out on certain definite lines, after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them; so that not only by their words and teaching, but by their labours—and what they did, *we learn how they*, to whom Christ had intrusted this great undertaking, *understood His instructions and design.*

If, therefore, we want to gain more light upon this important question, and to know more perfectly the will of the Lord concerning His Church, we must look well to what the Apostles *said* and *did*. For it is the almost universal belief of Christians, throughout all generations, that in what they agreed upon, transacted, and taught respecting the Church, they strictly followed the instructions of their Lord; and both

explained, and showed by pattern, more fully, and in divers ways, what was the Will and Design of Christ: pointing out in what sense the Church was to be taken and regarded, and what was the duty of all Christians in reference to it. The sacred records of these matters form the Bible Commentary on the Gospels; and will unfold to our view many points about which some doubt or dispute has arisen, and respecting which we want to obtain further information.

We must not, however, *at first* expect to see the Church founded by the Apostles all at once spring up into existence in a complete form and condition. In any material building we do not expect this: the foundation is to be laid first; there is a collection of materials for the building to make; all may seem to be in confusion; and the lookers on may not tell what to make of the work; but little by little, in due time, the building takes shape, and is seen to follow certain lines; and yet it is not till the builders have completed their work and put on the top stone that we can fully judge, or gain an adequate idea of the structure—the beauty and unity of the whole, and the adaptability of its several parts to the purpose for which it was designed. And so we can only look for something like this—something like a consummated pattern of what the Church is everywhere to be like, when we come to the close of the Apostles' ministry as a united body at Jerusalem.

This is what our Divine Head taught us to look for. There would, and must be a gradual growth of

the Church, and that it would not attain its fulness all at once at the beginning. "So is the kingdom of God," He said, "as if a man should cast *seed* into the ground ...and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how...first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (St. Mark iv. 26—28.) This He also showed in the Parable of the Mustard Seed, and that of the Leaven. All of which foretold the increase of the Church from small beginnings; and the developing of itself from within itself. As then we can see a great difference between the seed which is cast into the earth, and the first blade when it appears: and then again between the blade at first, and when the ear upon it appears, and then also when the full corn in the ear is seen ripening for the golden harvest; so must we not expect to see the Church of Christ in its complete form when the Apostles first begin their work. We can watch their labours with interest, and the progress they make, and the manifestations of Church life, but we must wait till towards the close of their labours at Jerusalem, before we see the form of the Church fully developed; as a sample of what the Church in all its parts, and in future time, was designed to be like.

We should notice, however, the strict obedience of the Apostles to our Lord's commands at the very beginning: which forms the key note of all their future labours. They depart not from Jerusalem till the signal is given them. They wait in confident expectation of the promise of the Holy Ghost. They

will not even begin the work until He comes to endue them with power from on high; so that in this momentous work they may have His continual help and guidance. They attempt to make no converts; they do not begin to preach even, or baptize. In this they show their entire compliance with the instructions they have received from Christ.

In those waiting days—days of holy expectancy, prayer and supplication with praise, and frequent visits to the Temple—one transaction, however, occurred which should be noticed; and that is, the election of another Apostle in the place of Judas. Here at once two or three things strike us as remarkable. First, why should they have thought it so necessary to fill up the place of Judas at all, unless they had received some express injunction from their Lord? Secondly, why *now*, before the coming of the Holy Ghost, which had been promised not many days hence, unless they had been so instructed by Christ? And thirdly, mark their evident desire to be guided in their choice by the will of Christ, though He had ascended into Heaven. They do all they can, and prepare for the election; but they leave the ultimate decision in Christ's hands.

It seems strange, as one writer remarks, that the Redeemer Himself did not fill up the vacancy during the forty days that preceded His Ascension: or that the Apostles did not *wait* till they had received the Holy Ghost, which had been promised to them shortly. Or if St. Peter, for instance, had had this gift of the

Holy Ghost then, and he alone had been appointed, as those of the Papacy think, to be the head of the Church in the place of Christ, then he might at once by heavenly guidance have selected a new Apostle; but this was not the will or design of Christ, and would have been a proceeding obviously opposed to all propriety if the purpose of Christ was to stand; for *one* Apostle evidently could not elect another. All of them evidently required to be appointed directly by the Lord, for they all received equal authority from Him; and it was apparently the will of Christ that upon the full number as He had originally appointed the Holy Spirit should descend, so that they might begin the great undertaking together, as a small body of authorised legislators and rulers. And if they had not previously been instructed how to proceed by our Lord Himself, in all likelihood they would have left things alone, and done nothing.

On the day of Pentecost, when the coming of the Holy Ghost was manifested by audible and visible signs of a supernatural character, two things among others are to be noticed: first, that the Apostles and other disciples of Christ were assembled together “with one accord in one place.” Showing that there was a disposition to band together; they were not inclined to separate, and each go his own way, nor yet to lose their distinctive position, in the general body of the disciples; they are united as the Apostles of Christ; and while it was thus ordered, the Holy Ghost came upon them severally, for the “cloven tongues

like as of fire sat upon *each* of them : and they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost." They were *through Him* welded together into one body : and the Church was then brought into existence as a Divine visible Society or organisation, for this coming of the Holy Ghost is justly accounted as the Birth-day of the Church. The Kingdom of God *had now come*, and *was set up* in the world.

The second point to notice is, that the Holy Ghost came upon each of the Apostles *equally alike* ; there is no difference made between them ; one is not distinguished from the other Apostles, as being endued with more power from on high. Each of them evidently received it in like degree with the rest. The lambent flame sat upon each of them : indicating that the Divine power and authority in the Church was not to be intrusted to any one individual ; but that there should be several channels through which this divine life should be distributed, and the authority in the Church exercised ; thus were they as rulers of the Church to be regarded as having equal dignity and power. The unity of the Church was not to consist in having all authority centred in one earthly head, and all to be guided by his dictates : this is a very low, worldly, and erroneous view of its character, being at variance with Christ's design : for the unity of the Church is far higher, safer, and of Divine origin, and depends upon our individually having union with Christ, the only true Head, and life with Him, through the Holy Ghost, in the appointed way.

Some divines think that the flame as of fire sat upon all the one hundred and twenty, as mentioned in the first chapter : others, however, confine it to the Apostles, with good reason. But however this may be, it is evident that the sacred author distinguishes the Apostles above, and as separated from the others present. For St. Peter, in speaking to all present and mentioning the reason why another should be chosen in the place of Judas, distinctly points out that they are a small designated body, and recognised as such by the rest ; for he says : “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time, the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning with the Baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken from us, *must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His Resurrection.*” And then observe, that after they had selected two thus qualified, they pray unto the Lord to shew which of the two He would have, with these significant words : “*That he may take part of this Ministry and Apostleship*, from which Judas by transgression fell.” And the sacred historian closes the account, by saying : “And the lot fell upon Matthias ; and *he was numbered with the Eleven Apostles.*” (Acts i. 21-26.)

So also after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when St. Peter preached the first sermon in the Church, to an assembled multitude, he is spoken of as “standing up with *the Eleven.*” (Acts ii. 14). From which we may justly gather, that they at once acknowledge, and take their position as the commissioned representatives of Christ,

with full authority to preach, and lay the foundation of the Church, on the lines on which it was to be built: and we may rightly infer that St. Peter spoke *in their name*, as well as his own—as the representative and mouth-piece of the Apostolic body. For it should be further observed, that it was as such that the people recognized him, and heard what he said unto them; for it is stated, that when “they were pricked to the heart,” they said *unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles*, “Men and Brethren what shall we do?” Moreover, it is said of the three thousand that were baptized, that “they continued steadfastly” both in the doctrine and fellowship, not of *St. Peter alone*, but of *the Apostles*. (Acts ii. 37-42).

And when it is said that, “with great power gave *the Apostles* witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus;” when *Jose*s, was surnamed Barnabas “*by the Apostles*;” and when those who had land and houses sold them, “and brought the money and laid it *at the Apostles’ feet*;” (Acts iv. 33—37), it must be seen at once, that there was some ruling power and authority in the Church from the beginning: that things were not left to take care of themselves; and that that power and authority in the Church was not in any one single Apostle by himself, nor in the members of the Society; but was vested in the small body of chosen men, to whom Christ had intrusted His Church.

It is clear that as a corporate body the Apostles act together, and act as possessed of more than

ordinary power and authority, for it is to be noticed also, that the Lord acknowledged and confirmed them as His witnesses and appointed ambassadors: for we read, that “by the hands of *the Apostles* were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.” And again, when *the Apostles* were seized and they were put in the common prison, “the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.” (Acts v. 12, 18, 19). Thus were their actions and teaching *as a body having authority*, witnessed to, and approved by Divine power, according to what is stated at the close of St. Mark’s Gospel, that when the Apostles went forth, and preached everywhere, the *Lord was working with them*, and “*confirming the word with signs following.*”

The Apostles are afterwards brought before the Council of the Jews, and are addressed as a select body, and they reply as such, for it is said, “*Peter and the other Apostles* answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than man.” And as a small body banded together for some definite purpose, are they “beaten,” “and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus.” They rejoice together, as they leave the Council, “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” And we are told that “daily in the Temple, and in every house, *they* ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” (Acts v. 25—42). From this it is evident that the Apostles laboured diligently and incessantly with other* helpers to fulfil the commission Christ had given them; but

it is carried on *in Jerusalem first* for some years in a most effectual manner, and *by the Apostles as the chief and governing body*, who have been commissioned by Christ, and as principally responsible to the Lord, for laying a good foundation for building the Church.

And here it is fitting that we should notice the *growth* of the Church, as *a visible body*. For though of Divine origin, and sustained by Divine power, it is still a visible and distinct Society in the world. The numbers of those who composed it, and who were from time to time received into the Church, were known; the individuals were known by name, and recognised by sight. There would be some bad members as well as good, some unfaithful as well as true, as our Divine Lord led us to expect, in his Kingdom; but this did not destroy the *visibility* of the Church of Christ on the earth; or make it necessary to invent the idea of an invisible Church of those who were alone to be accounted good, or thought themselves such; for of such a Church the Apostles and first Christians knew nothing.

At first "the number of the names" that formed the nucleus for beginning the Church at Jerusalem "were about an hundred and twenty," including the Apostles; then after St. Peter's address, we are told "there were *added* unto them about *three thousand souls*." But just observe who they were, and how they were *added* to the Church. "They that gladly received the word, were baptized." (Acts ii. 41.) And in the concluding words of the chapter, it is said, "And *the Lord* added to the Church daily such as were being saved."

(v. 47.) Thus what was done by His minister was accounted as done by Himself. Hence, also, the means whereby this addition was brought about was by implicitly following the instructions Christ had given them. The first step they were to take was to preach Christ crucified, and salvation through Him; and then to baptize all those who truly believed in Him; thus uniting them to Christ in one body: by which means also, through being united to Christ, these men became members of the Church; and it is after this manner also, the Church grew and increased.

Not long after this, when the Jews were offended at the sight of men and women flocking into the Kingdom of God—although St. Peter and St. John had in the meantime been cast into prison—we read that, “Many of them that heard the Word believed, and the number of the men was *about five thousand*.” (Acts iv. 4.) Thus the preaching of the Word had been continued by the other Apostles. And an able Commentator states, that “this number *does not include* the three thousand that were converted under the first sermon, but regards only those who now became true believers, and were added to the Church, so that there were *now eight thousand persons* added to it.” (Gill *in loco*.) And if this did not include women and children, then the number must have been still greater.

The work continued, for “with great power gave *the Apostles* witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.” (Acts iv. 33.) Their testimony respecting Christ was well nigh irresistible.

tible. Hence, we shortly afterwards read, that "Believers were the more *added to the Lord*, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts v. 14.) And again, in the following Chapter, it is said: "And the Word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith." (vi. 7.) Some years pass by; and on the last occasion when St. Paul went up to Jerusalem, and presented himself before James, and all the elders, they "said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe." (Acts xxi. 20.) The Greek word for thousands is *myriads*, as the marginal reference states, so that the passage may be read—How many tens of thousands of Jews there are that believe.

From these incidental allusions in the Acts of the Apostles it is calculated that there must have been within a few years from fifty to sixty thousand Christians, in this single city at Jerusalem where the Church was first begun; while some commentators estimate that the number may very probably have amounted to even a hundred thousand. Be this as it may, the number was very great. And, as it was impossible that all of them could be assembled in one building, there must have been of necessity many congregations; especially as there would probably be few large buildings that would be allowed them, or of which they could avail themselves, so that there would be doubtless many places where the believers were accustomed to meet together for prayer, thanksgiving, receiving the Sa-

crament, and instruction about their faith and duties. There would be some one appointed to take the lead in these several congregations, to watch over the members, and would know each individual, could tell something of each—his appearance and something of his character, and could give in the tale of the whole of the members belonging to each separate congregation, to the company of the Apostles; and make known to them also any defection—any withdrawal from their fellowship, any inconsistency or misconduct of any of those that remained with them. Thus the Church was and is still a *visible* society, as our Lord designed it to be. There must of necessity be a *visible ministry*, or how could it be known who were over them in the Lord? There must be *visible Sacraments*, or how could the Christians resort to them? There must be a *visible community*, or how could believers join the body, or be added thereto? And how could that body be perpetuated without some *visible* and well known means?

Bishop Butler, speaking on this question, says:—“Miraculous powers were given to the first preachers of Christianity, in order to their introducing it into the world: a *visible Church* was established, in order to continue it, and carry it on successively throughout all ages. Had Moses and the Prophets, Christ and His Apostles, only taught, and by miracles proved, religion to their contemporaries, the benefit of their instructions would have reached but a small part of mankind. Christianity must have been in a great degree sunk and forgot in a very few ages. To prevent this, appears

to have been one reason why a *visible Church* was instituted; to be like a city upon a hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty which we owe our Maker; to call men continually, both by precept and instruction to attend to it, and by the form of religion ever before their eyes, remind them of the reality; to be the repository of the oracles of God; to hold up the light of revelation in aid of that nature, and propagate it throughout all generations to the end of the world." (Analogy, Part ii, Chap. 1.) There may be objections and arguments advanced against this characteristic of the Church, as there may be against the most sacred thing, and the best authenticated: but they can all be satisfactorily answered.

There is, however, another point to notice, and it is this, that though there were many congregations of Christians in Jerusalem, yet were they all *but one Church; they were all united in one body*. Thus to whatever congregation they belonged, the Christians thereof formed part of the Church of Jerusalem; they were not so many separate, independent Churches, but formed one Church. And the Church at Jerusalem is always therefore spoken of in the singular number, never in the plural: for instance, "Saul made havoc of the Church." "Tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem." When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem, "they were received of the Church." Thus you will find that how many soever Congregations there were in one place or city, *they are never spoken of as the Churches*

in that place, but as the Church, as one body, united under some one central government.

When the word is used in the plural number, as "the Churches" it applies to the Church *in different places*, as for instance, "Then had *the Churches* rest throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria." Of St. Paul it is said, "He went through Syria and Cilicia confirming *the Churches*." Any one of the congregations in one place might be termed, '*the Church*,' as being a part of the whole, after this manner, where it is said, "the Church which is at thy house," because not any one of these congregations was regarded by its members as independent by itself, for all were connected with the Apostles and under their rule; or severally under some one whom *they had deputed* to minister to them, and who was held responsible to the Apostles. They were not isolated congregations, and had to join others to make a union. They were already a portion of the body and united to it. Thus a unity of Christians, it would appear, was established from the very beginning. The very origin and nature of the Church required this. None were admitted into the Church by Baptism, but by the Apostles or those whom they appointed; and none were regarded as members of it unless they submitted to the rule of the Apostle. And if the Christians in one part became too numerous to meet in one building, the Apostles would appoint or sanction another place for meeting, at which a few of the members would attend under some one appointed and approved by them. Thus,

these individuals would still continue in union with the Church. Though there were then many congregations at Jerusalem, and in other places afterwards, as well, they were *not Congregational Churches* in the modern sense of the word. Such Churches were unknown among the Primitive Christians, or, if formed by contentious persons, were not recognized as parts of the Church.

The Church at Jerusalem was particularly free from divisions and dissensions; and was—as it was designed to be—a model of what the Church should be in every other place. So manifestly were the Apostles clothed with miraculous power, that the first Christians, however gifted they were, never thought of withstanding them, or of setting up their own views or ways in place of what the Apostles taught or appointed. From the very first day it is said:—“Fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles.” (Acts ii. 43). And after the terrible judgment that overtook Ananias and Sapphira, for attempting to deceive the Apostles, it is said, “And great fear came upon all *the Church*, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the Apostles were many wonders and signs wrought among the people.” (Acts v. 11, 12). So that they all the more readily submitted to the authority of the Apostles, and were obedient to their word, for they saw that God was with them of a truth.

Besides which, it must be noted that the Apostles still tarried at Jerusalem for some years, and were

able to be personally present, and to superintend and set in order the whole organisation of the infant Church at Jerusalem ; so that few irregularities or dissensions arose : and therefore the *unity of the Church was manifestly displayed* ; indeed, so much so, that at the beginning “all that believed were together, and had all things common.” (Acts ii. 44). And this state of things seemed to continue for some time after this, for we read that “the multitude of them who believed were of one heart, and of one soul ; neither said any of them that ought of the things which they possessed were their own : but they had all things common.” (Acts iv. 32). Here, then, we may perceive at the first, there was an actual basis for true Christian unity, established by the Apostles of Christ. And if ever the words of the Psalmist received their fulfilment, when he exclaimed, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to *dwell together in unity!*” it was then : for they “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.” (Acts ii. 46-47).

As we proceed with the few but important events recorded in the Acts, it is the more evident that the Apostles were regarded by the Christians as joint governors of the Church : for instance, “when the number of the disciples were multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians,” (probably only a small section of converts to Christianity) against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, it is stated that “*the Twelve* called the

multitude of the disciples unto them," and gave them instructions what they were to do. (Acts vi.) The members of the Church, observe, have a part to take; they are called upon to assist in selecting a certain number of fit men to serve in an office for which they were needed; while the Apostles still kept the actual appointment and ordination of the persons in their own hands. The Apostles depict to the disciples the kind of men they must choose; they must be of "honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." And then they add, "*whom we may appoint over this business.*" This "*pleased the whole multitude,*" and they chose seven men, "*whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.*" Here, then, we have the Twelve Apostles acting together in a most solemn matter; they concur and join together in the appointment and ordination of the seven men to the sacred office of Deacons in the Church of Christ. The setting of things in order in the infant Church, the decreeing what is to be done, and the appointment of officers, certainly mark the Apostles out as having been not only the framers of a constitution for the Church, but as the chief governors. And it is to be noticed in this matter, as well as in others, that the Scriptures make it appear as the work of the whole body or college of the Apostles, and not of one among them whom they might regard as head or chief—for they are all spoken of as chiefs or rulers, and are evidently so regarded, and looked up to, by the multitude of the disciples.

Again, at the time of the Persecution which arose against the Church, when St. Stephen was stoned to death, we read that the Christians "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, *except the Apostles.*" (Acts viii. 1.) In the context no reason is given for their staying behind; yet there must have been some good cause for it, though it is not mentioned; for why should they alone run the risk of persecution and the fear of being cut off, when they were so much needed at the beginning of the Church's existence? And why did not some of them, at least, make this an occasion of going forth to preach the Gospel in other places? The fact of itself is very significant: for it shows that they were of one mind and one purpose; that they were united, kept together, and co-operated together. Apollonius, a writer in the second century, states "that it was handed down by tradition, that our Saviour commanded His Apostles not to depart from Jerusalem *for twelve years.*" (See Eusebius, Eccl: His. v. 18.) The same tradition was contained in "Peter's Preaching," a book not received into the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, but very ancient; for Clement of Alexandria, at the beginning of the third century, quoting from it, relates, "The Lord said to His Apostles, '*After twelve years* go ye into all the world, lest they say we have not heard.'" (Clem: Alex. Strom: vi. 5.)

Now, as it has been before hinted at, there is very little doubt but that our Saviour gave many instructions to His Apostles about His Church and how they were

to proceed, which are not recorded. Nor was there need that all things should be put down; sufficient that we regard the Apostles as constantly acting together, and speaking *according to the directions Christ had given them, and under the guidance and special inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, as we are taught in the sacred volume. The learned Bishop Pearson says, "Now if this be true, if Christ did give a command to the Apostles that for twelve years they should abide at Jerusalem, it will not seem strange that when the disciples withdrew themselves through fear of a very severe persecution, all the Apostles should remain at Jerusalem, mindful of the command, and in confident reliance upon the Divine protection." (Lectures on the Acts, v. 57.) But whether Christ gave this command or not, the fact itself is recorded, that the Apostles *did remain behind during their persecution, while others fled*. And their thus remaining together as a collegiate body, to whom the Divine Redeemer had committed the founding and chief care of His Church, is a sufficient evidence that they were united in what they did, and associated together, both for determining the lines of the Church's foundation, and acting as its governors. This short incidental mention, too, of their remaining behind gives us an insight into their manner of life at this time, in consorting together and acting in union, as one man, for some great purpose.

This must have been of great value; for it would give them the opportunity of conversing together on many points respecting the formation of the Church which would

necessarily claim their attention ; and enable them to take counsel together, and determine various matters concerning both the present and future welfare of the Church ; how they should all work on the same lines when they eventually separated to go forth into the world on their several missions ; so that they might all labour after some definite and well understood plan which they had settled upon together, that they might all teach the same truths relative to the Faith of Christ ; and all give and order the same rules, and govern alike in their several spheres ; that when no longer able to confer together, they might have before them those essential principles, whereby they might keep the Church, in the many and various places where it should be planted, *as one and the same Church everywhere* ; all the several parts and members living in one holy and universal fellowship with Christ their Lord, as their only Head.

Take another instance, of their having the chief authority in the Church, and acting as a College of Apostles with one mind and voice. “When *the Apostles which were at Jerusalem* heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John,” to confirm those that Philip had baptized. (Acts viii. 14-17.) And from this passage two points seem to be established. First, the Apostles, as being Rulers in the Church, by the Lord’s appointment, determined to keep certain parts or offices in the Ministry in their own hands ; and do not commit them to those who are called to assist them as subordinate ministers. Hence showing that the Confirmation of those admitted into the

Church by Baptism, as well as the ordination of assisting ministers, and other acts of moment, which would mark their having the chief authority in the Church, should still be retained by them as governors. The second point is, that individual Apostles, even those who on some occasions took the lead, and were accounted the chiefest, seem willingly to yield obedience to, and fall in with the wish and voice of an authority above them individually, that is, in the determination and decision of the Apostolate, or whole college of the Apostles in Council—an authority that both St. Peter and St. John acknowledge; whose bidding they follow out, whose representatives they are, and to whom they hold themselves responsible. If, however, St. Peter had been made the head of the Church alone in our Lord's place, or had held anything like supreme authority, as the Popes of Rome now pretend to have, as his successors, little would it have become the other Apostles to send their Sovereign upon any important business even, as the other Apostles did St. Peter to Samaria. They on the other hand, would have been ready to be sent by him. It is a striking proof, then, that St. Peter did not possess any such power as is now claimed for him, as head over all the Church, and over the Apostles themselves; for it is clear that he was subservient to the rest of the Apostles in their collective capacity, and readily undertook, with St. John, the mission the body had intrusted to him. This proves also that neither St. Peter or the other Apostles knew anything of any Petrine

claim; and consequently the Papal scheme must have been an invention of after ages, as facts clearly shew.

A singular instance of the responsibility of individual Apostles to the authority of the whole college of the Apostles, as the governing body of the Church, is again set forth in the case of St. Peter: and was doubtless to be an example for others, who may have much less authority for what they do than this chosen and ardent Apostle had. By express revelation, St. Peter is led to preach the Gospel for the first time to the Gentiles, and when the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on the Apostles themselves at the beginning, enabling them to speak with new tongues, St. Peter is constrained by Divine intimation to receive into the Church by Baptism, those who were *uncircumcised*, and to account them as fellow-members of the same body with the believing Jews; and partakers of the same promises in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel.

This was a new departure, though foretold, and included in the Apostolic commission: and the Apostles and brethren in Judæa hearing of what had been done by St. Peter; and not knowing the reason for this fresh line of action on his part, call upon the Apostle to give an account of the transaction, and what led him so to act. St. Peter might have refused; but he does not; feeling himself amenable to the Apostles, and the Church generally at Jerusalem, he presented himself before them, and “rehearsed the matter from the beginning;” and showed good cause why he had taken the momentous step he had done. He excused

himself to them, as free from blame, in thus opening the door to the Gentiles, proving that God had laid this upon him, exclaiming, "What was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts xi. 17.) And with this the assembly appear to have been well pleased and satisfied, for, "when they heard these things they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (v. 18.) They acknowledge in fact that St. Peter was more than fully justified in what he had done; that if he had not done what he had, he would have been resisting God.

But what should be noticed in elucidation of the matter before us, is, that the Apostles and Brethren that were in Judæa not only took a deep interest in all that happened to the Church elsewhere, but seemed also to have some general supervision over the whole body. The Brethren among the Jews are here associated with the Apostles, because for the sake of a right understanding and agreement about the matter, the whole Church should be satisfied, that this momentous change, in admitting the Gentiles, was not of St. Peter, as an Apostle even, but of God. And it should be noticed also; that St. Peter was far from pretending to any superiority over the rest of the Apostles, because of His being chosen of God to open a door to the Gentiles; for he did not consider it beneath him, to render an account of his actions to them, but, with an honest straightforwardness and humility, related the whole matter, so as to assure them that he had not acted, or been prompted *to do this, of himself*, since he

was naturally opposed to it, as some of the Brethren had been, who had contended with him.

It must now be observed that Christianity by this time had been largely extended to other places; for in the verse immediately following the above account, we read: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only." (xi. 19.) And we are told that "*a great number believed, and turned to the Lord:*" and that when the tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem, they deputed Barnabas to go to Antioch. And mark in what follows how all Christian religion still centres in the Person of the Lord Jesus; "when he (Barnabas) came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart *they should cleave to the Lord*. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and *much people was added unto the Lord.*" (v.v. 23, 24.) Much the same expression as was used after the three thousand who had been converted on the day of Pentecost had been baptized. Hence we learn that Christianity is not so much a system of doctrines and precepts as an attachment and devotion to the Person of the Lord Jesus, and personal union with Him through the Church which He founded: though this necessarily implies, and requires obedience to the faith, precepts, and principles of the Gospel, as taught and received by the Apostles and the Primitive Church.

And before proceeding further, we would draw special attention to this point, as a matter of great importance in the early history of the Church. Though the Lord Jesus Christ had ascended up to heaven, and was acknowledged as there bodily present, in our nature as man, at the right hand of God, yet was He also, by His Divine power, present with His Church and the Apostles in a very real, though spiritual, manner. And it is to be noticed how they, by a living faith in Him and in His word, do constantly recognise Him *as present* and taking part in their proceedings. The Apostles regard Him as still their only absolute living, abiding Head, to Whom they refer, and to Whom they look up for guidance and support, through the help of His Holy Spirit, and carefully disclaim all independent power and authority, as not being in themselves, but in Him, on Whom they trust and for Whom they act.

Thus, for instance, when the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple was healed by St. Peter and St. John, they said unto the people, "Why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, *as though by our own power or holiness* we had made this man to walk?" "God," they told them, "*had thereby glorified His Son Jesus Christ, and His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong whom ye see and know.*" (Acts iii.) The Lord Jesus working in the Church and with His Ministers is what is revealed to us in the Acts of the Apostles: for this is not a solitary instance. In the portraiture of the

Church given us therein, He is represented as its central, most potent Person, still actively taking a part, and individually interested and concerned in all they do.

You will remember, that it is to Jesus that they refer the choice of one to fill up the place of Judas in the Apostolate. It is Jesus who sends the Holy Ghost upon them, to abide with them for ever, and to testify of Him. It is Jesus the Lord who adds daily to the Church those that believe on Him. It is Jesus who works miracles by the hands of the Apostles; for it is to him they appeal in the midst of great dangers to do these supernatural things, in these strong words of supplication: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and *that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy Holy Child Jesus.* (Acts iv. 29-30). Their faith enables them to keep a close, living connection with Jesus; and in all they do and say, to depend wholly on Him.

It is the Lord Jesus that the first martyr St. Stephen looks up to, and sees at the right hand of God, when stoned to death. It is Jesus who calls Saul as he goes on his persecuting errand, and plainly tells him that in persecuting the Christians, he is persecuting Him. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." It is Jesus who sends Ananias to baptize him. It is the Lord, who by His Angel appears to Cornelius, and bids him send for St. Peter. It is the Lord whom St. Peter addresses, when, after the appearance of the

vision, a voice is heard saying, "Rise, Peter ; kill and eat." It is the Lord who sends St. Peter to Cornelius. It is the Lord, who by His Angel, delivers Peter from the prison ; and smites Herod on his throne. It is the Lord Jesus who bids St. Paul to go into Macedonia ; and again warns him to "make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem:" and assures him that He has work for him to do elsewhere, saying unto him: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." And again, when taken prisoner, it is said, "the night following, *the Lord stood by him*, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul." And when the writer of the Acts closes his record of the Church, it is with this statement, that St. Paul continued two whole years "*preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Thus are we taught that Jesus is the true living Head of the Church on earth ; that as He had appointed a ministry for it, and consecrated the Apostles to be the governors and chief rulers of that one Church in His stead, so did they still recognise and acknowledge His presence with them continually. And as He was truly present with His Church in its infancy, so is He still: for though he does not manifest His power now by working miracles, since the necessity for them as at the beginning has ceased, we cannot doubt the fulfilment of His promise in these latter days, when He said, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*" No length of time, no past unfaithfulness in the Church, will make His promise

void or of none effect, if His people will only still have faith in Him, and, as He said, "Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Thus the Church on earth is ever to acknowledge Jesus Christ as *the only living Head*, as the only one universal Lord of it, to whom all orders and degrees of men in it, in their several vocations and ministry, are subject: according to the will and design He propounded to His Apostles. It was only when faith in Christ's actual presence in His Church waxed faint, and the ambitious design of one branch of the Church sought to establish an authority over all the rest, that the idea was broached, and put forward, that it was necessary to have a visible earthly head to the Church as well, into whose hands it should be assumed that Christ had placed all authority, and to whom all other rulers should be subject; and who should have the right to dictate to all Christians any new article of faith, in which it would be necessary for them to believe, if they would be saved. But this Christ did not do. There is no authority for it in the Scriptures; nor in the settlement or constitution of the Church by the Apostles. It is not part of Christ's revealed will and design, but an innovation upon it, and contrary to its purpose. And, it is, therefore, to be eschewed and renounced by all those who have a living faith in Christ's promise, and real presence in His Church.

There is a little incident with which this part of our observations may be fitly closed: and that is, that "the disciples were *called Christians first in Antioch.*"

You may remember that Barnabas had been sent here by the Church at Jerusalem. Then it was that through the instrumentality of Barnabas, St. Paul had been induced to join him in the work at Antioch; where, for a whole year, they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. Hitherto, the members of the Church had everywhere been known as *disciples, believers, brethren, those of the Church*, but now at Antioch, they were for the first time called *Christians*; a name which is now everywhere appropriated to them, and by them; and even by those who do not belong to the Church as instituted by Christ and His Apostles.

And why were they *here* for the first time called by this distinguished name, unless they had in a peculiar degree showed that they clave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, as they had been emphatically taught? Christ's life was evidently manifested in them; they were strictly Christ's adherents and followers: imitators of Him whose name they were to bear; for not only did they steadfastly set themselves to learn of Christ as their Master, how to walk in newness of life, as He walketh, but they shewed that they accounted themselves *as belonging to Christ*, were His, rather than their own, from henceforth; since they had been dedicated to Him in baptism, signed and sealed with the unction of the Holy Spirit, promised to all who truly believed.

To have gained this title here was a great honour; for Antioch was a Gentile city: and it is important to notice this, because henceforth Antioch was to become

another centre of Church operations; and a place of some note among the Churches. Antioch was further distinguished as the place where St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, first regularly entered upon his ministry in the Church; and from whence he went by direction of the Holy Spirit, to preach and plant the Church in other parts; and to which he was wont to return again and again, after his missionary journeys, as the seat of his Apostleship.

Before, however, entering upon a consideration of the evidence afforded us by the ministry of St. Paul, relative to the Constitution of the Church as founded by the Apostles, we must consider first somewhat attentively the several steps by which "the Twelve" finally completed the Church at Jerusalem; putting on, as it were, the top-stone to the building before they separated; since she was to be the Mother Church of others; the model by which the Church in other parts was to be fashioned. This matter, however, must be reserved to another Chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM COMPLETED.

THERE evidently seems to have been some definite plan and order carried out in permanently settling the lines on which the Church at Jerusalem should be conducted in the future. There appears to have been no dispute or quarrelling about what they should do; and some taking a different line to others; and divisions ensuing therefrom. There indeed arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because they thought their widows were neglected. But the Apostles stepped in, and soon settled the matter. We never read of the Apostles having to shake their rod of authority at any section of the Christians here, as St. Paul had to do at some in the Corinthian Church: moreover their authority was fully manifested, and supported by God, when Ananias and Sapphira attempted to deceive them: which henceforward led all the members of the Church to treat them with deference and reverence, and yield implicit obedience to their orders.

All things otherwise seemed to work harmoniously and peacefully among the Christians at Jerusalem, as if unity and brotherly love continued; as if the whole ordering of Church matters, among some tens of thousands, was under one definite government, and

guided by some settled rules or canons of action. Nothing like disorder or dissension is noted as cropping up after many years; even though the elements of discord would not have been wanting here, as elsewhere, between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, if they had not been kept in check with a firm hand. When St. Paul visited the holy city, before his imprisonment at Rome, though assailed by the unbelieving Jews, who hated him, and sought for his condemnation, we hear not a word of any disturbance or separation into different bodies taking place among the people belonging to the Church; they were still *one visible body, under one well recognized rule*. Though we hear of their deep poverty, and of the famine that prevailed among them, there is nothing said to belie the character which was given them earlier on, when it is said of them, that "*the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.*"

It is important to notice this character of the Church at Jerusalem, not only because it shews the unity that *continued to exist* under the rule of the Apostles, and after their departure: but since our Divine Lord directed the Apostles to make their beginning at Jerusalem; it became truly the Mother Church of all, from which all others should take their rise; and hence also it became *the pattern* for the building of the Church in other places; that they might severally be constituted like it, and be ordered and guided by the same canons. Thus would the Church, though extended to many places and parts of the world, still continue one body,

carried on everywhere on the same principal lines ; and all its members be under one and the same kind of government. It is therefore now our pleasing occupation to endeavour to trace out the organization of the Church at Jerusalem to its completion by the Apostles.

And one thing that particularly claims our attention is that divers Orders of ministers were appointed to serve in the Church. It will be observed, that the ministers are not all of one standing and authority ; they are not all equal ; some have not the same duties and functions to perform that others have. Some have higher authority than others ; but the greater number are under authority, and are to be guided and subservient to those above them. There must be subordination in the Church, as there is in every well ordered Society or Service : as in governing the Army or Navy, or even the whole of a Kingdom. And it is to be noticed that these particulars come out incidentally, and not in any formal statement ; but are gathered from various allusions in the fragmentary records of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles : and are thus woven into the very texture of these sacred Scriptures.

At first there appear a variety of helpers, and nothing definitely settled, save that the Apostles bare rule. The Apostles were the first preachers of the Gospel ; but in this they were assisted doubtless by some of the seventy also, and other disciples of Christ ; nay, all who were baptized endeavoured in one way or another to spread the glad tidings of salvation through

the crucified Saviour, of whose resurrection they were fully assured. But the time came when the Apostles must make some more definite arrangement for the regular continuance of the work of the ministry; the necessity for this had forced itself upon their notice, even before the "great persecution," that arose "against the Church which was at Jerusalem," after the death of Stephen, when, as it has been before noticed, "they were all scattered, *except the Apostles.*" So that now it became more necessary than ever, since the other teachers had gone; and they were left alone. And it is not long before we begin clearly to discern *three distinct orders of ministers* for the permanent service of the Church.

I.—There is no doubt that the Apostles were an Order by themselves, and that they had the highest rank, and chief authority in the Church from the first. They alone had been consecrated by Christ Himself to this high office, as we have seen. And the whole ordering of the Church was placed in their hands, with authority supported by divine power. They had not only to legislate for the Church, and give to it a constitution in accordance with the instruction received from Christ, but they were to be rulers, and act as governors of the Church. This seems to be the position that the Divine Head of the Church designed them to take, when He intimated to them, in words we have already noticed, that they should sit upon *twelve thrones*, judging the twelve tribes of the Israel of God. Hence we perceive them taking the direction and control of all things into their own hands, ordaining and appointing

other ministers, keeping the Confirmation of those that had been baptized as members of the Church in their own hands, and in other ways exercising a constant supervision over the infant Church, and determining matters regarding her growth and well-being, and the preservation of her unity.

II.—As, however, their position and functions, as being at the head of affairs, have been already fully set forth, marking them out as belonging to the First Order of Ministers, we may proceed at once to turn our attention to the Second Order, as it was eventually settled for a permanency in the Church, by the ordination of Elders or Presbyters. They are evidently in a lower rank to the Apostles, and naturally subservient to those who appoint and ordain them.

We hear nothing of them for a long time in the Acts of the Apostles, though some mention is made of other preachers and teachers. It is not till the close of the XIth Chapter—the one that contains the account of St. Peter's admission of the Gentiles into the Church—that we learn, for the first time, that the Sacred Order of Elders existed in the Church at Jerusalem.

It comes out incidentally, as several other important matters do, respecting the early Church of the Apostles. It was on this wise : there happened to be a great dearth at that time ; and the disciples at Antioch, wishing to shew their love and regard and fellowship for their spiritual kindred — as members of one great family in the Lord—"determined, every man according to his ability, to send relief unto the Brethren

which dwelt in Judæa : which also they did, and sent it *to the Elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Paul.” (v.v. 29, 30.) They were then in existence ; a recognised Order of Ministers ; and it must have been sometime previous to this that the Twelve Apostles had found it necessary to have something definitely settled, for the future ordering of Ministers to act under them in the service of the Church. It is highly probable that Christ had given them direct instructions about this matter. But, however this may be, though we have no account or intimation in the Scriptures of their first appointment, we nevertheless find the Elders existing as permanent officers, not only in Jerusalem, but in the country round about, assisting the Apostles, having been appointed and ordained by them ; and responsible to them for the people committed to their charge.

And here we may notice, that there are other things for which there may appear to be no direct command from our Lord, but which we become aware of only by some casual remark ; from which we learn what had been settled by the Apostles, as Christ had enjoined them ; and what was the practice, ordinance, or rule of the Church in the Apostolic times, and thus received as part of the Constitution of the Church. Thus it is that we have no express command given for observing *the first day of the week* instead of the seventh, as *the Christian Sabbath* ; but yet it is afterwards universally adopted by all Christians, and that because it was thus received by the Primitive Christians,

and so observed by the Apostles ; since on the first day of the week they especially commemorated Christ's Resurrection from the dead, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Church. Hence, on this day they constantly celebrated the Holy Communion and met together for Divine worship, though they did not confine these sacred services to this day alone. And so also the sacred rite of *Confirmation* is continued in the Church, though not expressly ordered, because it is proved to be of Apostolic origin. (Acts viii. 14-17). And in like manner *Infant Baptism* is permitted, and ordered, though not positively enjoined in Holy Scripture, because in baptizing whole households, the Apostles did not exclude children ; and because it seemed, in early times, most agreeable to the injunctions of Christ, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." And so it is here ; though we know not when *the Second Order of Ministers* was instituted, or what led to the permanent settlement of it, yet we find them in the exercise of their sacred ministry, and evidently as having been so engaged for some time ; subordinate to the Apostles ; and that fresh accessions to the Order were made by the Apostles only, as will shortly be shown.

Later on evidence is given that next to the Apostles they had become the most important body of Ministers, and were taken into consultation with them. For when certain of the Jewish Christians had gone down to Antioch, and told the Gentile Christians that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised, there was no

small dissension in that city, and they sent Paul and Barnabas to consult the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem about the matter. “And the *Apostles and Elders* came together for to consider of this matter.” (Acts xv. 1-6). And in the next Chapter we read, that when engaged on another missionary expedition, Paul and Silas, “as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the *Apostles and Elders* which were at Jerusalem.” (xvi. 4). Later on still, when the great Apostle of the Gentiles had occasion again to go up to Jerusalem, we learn that the day after his arrival, “Paul went in with us *unto James ; and all the Elders were present.*” (Acts xxi. 18.) We learn nothing of the other helpers in the ministry, as the Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers : they had disappeared, save the Deacons, though they were not taken into counsel on these occasions. It may be that the others had entirely left Jerusalem, when the persecution had arisen about Stephen. They had done their work at Jerusalem, and had gone forth to other places and countries as pioneers of the new Kingdom of Christ, which they were to aid the Apostles in setting up. And the Apostles, who at that time still stayed at Jerusalem, were then left free to put the affairs of the Church at Jerusalem on a permanent basis, so that when the time should come that they themselves must depart, the welfare of the Church would be well looked after, and cared for—and become also a model after which other individual Churches should be fashioned. And thus we can perceive how

the office of Elder or Presbyter became a standing Order in the Ministry of Christ.

It is a question with some whether the *Order of Deacons*, which is regarded in the Church as the *third Order* in the ministry, was *first* determined upon, and brought into exercise by the Apostles, or the Second Order, that of Elders or Presbyters, which we are considering. That of deacons—if we are to take the ordination of the Seven as such, mentioned in the sixth Chapter of the Acts—comes first in being noticed : and yet it seems more in order that the appointment of Presbyters should have come first, to assist the Apostles in taking charge and oversight of the large numbers that pressed into the Church at the beginning. And this seems more probable, since, if we take into account the Seventy, who had been prepared by our Lord Himself, and sent out two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come, they seemed a body of men well fitted for the office, having a commission from Christ, ready at hand ; who ought to be employed as such, and were willing to undertake its duties. But since Scripture is silent upon the matter, it does not seem necessary to determine this point. What is sufficiently apparent, and essential for us to know is, that there were *divers Orders of Ministers in the Church of Christ from the beginning* ; and St. Paul intimates that they were directly, or mediately, through the Apostles, appointed or *constituted by Christ* : for when speaking of Christ ascending up on high, that He might fulfil all things, he adds, “And *He gave* some

Apostles ; and some Prophets ; and some Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry ; for the edifying (or building up) of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11, 12). Christians, therefore, should be prepared to look for *Ministers of different ranks in the Church, as agreeable to Christ's design*, and to accept those Orders which the Apostles seem to have settled upon, and which the Primitive Christians received as of permanent standing in the Church of Christ. Further evidence as to the appointment of Presbyters will be considered when we come to the testimony of St. Paul.

III.—As regards *the third Order of Ministers, that of the Deacons*, an objection meets us at the beginning, because they are *not* regarded by many Dissenters as part of the ministry of Christ ; but as holding a secular appointment, "to manage the temporalities of the Church," and, "to distribute their alms among the people." But let us inquire whether this is agreeable to the testimony of Scripture, to look upon them merely as laymen—good prudent business men ? If so, why were they ordained ? what need was there for this ? It is true that when the Seven were ordained by the Apostles, they were especially chosen to see that the widows among the Grecian Christians "were not neglected in the daily ministration." (Acts vi.) But this was certainly not the whole of their duty, nor the chief part. The Apostles intimate that special qualifications were needed for those who were appointed to this office : the men were not only to be of "honest

report" but, "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," which seems to imply requirements for some higher work than that of their being confined solely to the distribution of alms, and looking after the temporalities of the Church. And then observe, how solemnly they are set apart by the Apostles, with prayer and the laying on of hands; so it would appear that the looking after the poor was not all, or even the principal part, of what they had to do, though it was the immediate cause of their appointment to this office.

And further, we are not left in doubt about this matter. Instead of taking an isolated passage to the exclusion of others, we look to see how they were afterwards employed: and ascertain what is further said about them: and from these we assuredly gather that they regarded themselves as true ministers of the Gospel of Christ, and were so regarded by others. For how are they engaged? No sooner is Stephen ordained than we find him *occupied in the work of the ministry*, and giving proof also of his being rightly called thereto, for we are told that, "full of faith and power, he did great wonders and miracles among the people." And that he was engaged *in preaching* the Gospel of Christ, and was well qualified for it, is evident from the fact, that when his enemies disputed with him, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." And when these enemies "suborned men, which said, We heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God," "for we heard him say, that this Jesus of

Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us;" he was evidently *witnessing* for Christ. And that he was able to preach the gospel effectually, is further seen from a consideration of the address which he made in the Council of the Jews, who were cut to the heart when he *testified* of Jesus, and boldly accused them of being His betrayers and murderers.

Why should there be any doubt, then, but that Stephen was truly in the ministry of Christ, though only then admitted to its lower order? A further account is also given of another of these Seven Deacons that were ordained by the Apostles; from which also it is sufficiently apparent that he also was truly engaged in the ministry of Christ. For when the Christians were scattered abroad very shortly after the ordination of the Seven, we are told, that "then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and *preached Christ unto them.*" (Acts viii. 5.) And very effectively, too; for it is related, that "they believed Philip *preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ,*" and were baptized. Philip was called also by an Angel of the Lord to speak to the Ethiopian Eunuch. And expounding to him the meaning of the passage in the Old Testament, which the Eunuch had been reading: he "began at the same Scriptures, and *preached unto him Jesus.*" (30-35). Moreover, he was engaged as a minister of Christ, as one whose office permitted him to baptize, and receive converts into the Church of God; for he baptized

the Eunuch, when satisfied that he truly believed in Jesus; as he had before baptized the Samaritan converts. Afterwards, it is narrated that "Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through *he preached* in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea." (37-40).

By taking in, then, *all that is said* in the Acts of the Apostles respecting two of these said Deacons, and not confining our interpretations—as to the nature of their office—to one isolated passage, we assuredly gather from Scripture that the Deacons were ministers of Christ, and ordained as such: for in the mouth of two or three witnesses the proof of it is sufficiently established to satisfy all reasonable men. And further, we consider that they are in error, and do not follow the Bible wholly, who refuse to receive and acknowledge them as ministers of Christ; and will only regard the Deacons as holding some secular office in the Church, such as might well be held by Churchwardens, and men with a good capacity for business. And we contend from the evidence produced, that the Church in this country is but following out the design of the Word of God, and the true meaning of the Apostolic Institutions, when she ordains approved men to this office; and tell us in her Ordination Service, that, "it appertaineth to the office of a Deacon in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read the Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church," as well as

“to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish.”

A sort of Nemesis seems not unfrequently to follow upon this disobedience to, or rather perversion of, the Scripture rule: and because those who have left the Communion of the Church refuse to have Deacons as the ministers of Christ according to what the Bible intimates, but will set up instead thereof secular Deacons, we are informed that the latter give themselves airs, are too ready to tyrannize over the ministers, and make their position among them at times almost unbearable. Hear what one of their once leading ministers said, and the bitter complaint he made. The Reverend Angel James, in his *Church Member's Guide*, asks, “What is the Deacon of some of our Dissenting Communities? Not simply the laborious, indefatigable, tender-hearted dispenser of the bounty of the Church; the inspector of the poor; the comforter of the distressed. No! but *the patron of the living, the Bible of the Minister, and the wolf of the flock*: an individual, who, *thrusting himself into the seat of government*, attempts to lord it over God's heritage, by dictating alike to the pastor and the members:...who thinks that in virtue of his office his opinion is to be law in all matters of Church government, whether temporal or spiritual; who upon the least opposition to his will frowns like a tyrant upon the spirit of rebellion among his slaves. Such men there have been, whose spirit of domination in the Church has produced a kind of *diaconophobia* in the minds of many ministers, who have suffered most

woefully from their bite, and have been led to resolve to do without them altogether, rather than be worried any more. Hence it is that the unscriptural plan of committees have been resorted to, that the tyranny of Lord-Deacons might be avoided." (pp. 146, 147.) Other instances equally and touchingly distressing might be adduced; but the above quotation is sufficient to shew that the system which they have adopted does not always work well, and often proves a bitter and galling yoke. And from more recent revelations it is to be feared that the same evils still prevail among these Christians.

It has been already stated that no account is given in the Acts of the Apostles *of the first* appointment of Elders. It is also a matter of question whether the ordination of "the Seven," to which allusion has been made, was the first occasion of any Deacons being ordained. The circumstances under which they were appointed seem to imply that it was not. The murmuring, to which reference is made, arose from "*the Grecians* against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected." Now, as the Jewish converts to Christianity were the more numerous, and consisted of many thousands, is it likely that they had no Deacons already exercising their ministry among them? *They* did not complain, but this might be just because they were already provided with these officers who looked after the necessities of their poor brethren. The murmuring came from a few foreign converts: and it is important to notice, that there does not appear to have been one

native Hebrew among the Seven: six of the names are said to be Grecian, and the seventh that of a proselyte; which would lead us to infer that those who murmured had the principal hand in choosing these "seven" from among themselves, because the Jews had already Deacons chosen from among their own people also, to attend to the wants of their poor. And if so, this will account for the willingness of the multitude of the disciples that foreigners, specially interested in their own countrymen, should alone be chosen as Deacons on this occasion. For it cannot be imagined that the Jews, who were the more influential, and greater in number, would have agreed to this, or been content with this arrangement of having only foreigners elected as Deacons for the whole Church at Jerusalem, if there had not been already some Deacons for the Hebrew Christians. The Seven appear, moreover, to have been appointed to look after the necessitous in the Grecian section alone; and if the Hebrew poor were not to be neglected, it is reasonable to suppose that Deacons had been previously appointed to look after them also.

From these considerations, then, it seems probable that the ordination of these seven was not the beginning of the Order—was not a new thing altogether, then for the first time brought into existence in the Church; but that these Seven were *additional Deacons* provided for an increasing section of the community, and that some of their own people (Grecians) were selected, so as to remove the least ground of complaint, or any idea of

unfairness being used. This is the view, indeed, which the Ecclesiastical historian, Mosheim, takes of the transaction; for he says: "The *first Deacons* of the Church, being chosen from *among the Jews* who were born in Palestine, were suspected by the foreign Jews of partiality in distributing the offerings which were presented for the support of the poor. To remedy, therefore, this disorder, *seven other Deacons* were chosen by order of the Apostles, and employed in the service of that part of the Church at Jerusalem which was composed of the foreign Jews converted to Christianity . . . of whom there were a certain number among the first Christians at Jerusalem, to whom it was reasonable that some regard should be shewn in the election of Deacons." (Com: de Rebus Christi, p. 118.) It is sufficient for our purpose, however, to know that there was another Order of ministers in the Church at Jerusalem in addition to the Elders; and that, with the Apostles—who were the Rulers of the Church, as well as the first framers of its constitution—we have a sufficiently clear intimation that a *three-fold order of ministers existed at the beginning*—viz., the Apostles, Elders or Presbyters, and Deacons.

Now it is quite clear that no Elders or Deacons—those of the *second* and *third* Orders—were allowed to minister in the Church at Jerusalem, but those who were approved and ordained by the Apostles who constituted the *first* Order. It must be apparent also to all thinking men that those who alone had the power to ordain men to the ministry, were in a superior or higher rank *to those whom they ordained*, and who alone by themselves had

not this power, however many they were; and who, from the very nature of their office, being engaged as helpers to the Apostles, were necessarily subservient to them, and had no independent rule, or authority to minister, but what they received from those in the first Order, who bare rule in the Church.

For though the Apostles were severally independent of one another and equally bare rule together in the Church — and which independency existed afterwards in the different branches of the Church of Christ—you never hear of the independency of *Congregations*, or of *their Ministers*. No single Congregation in Jerusalem was allowed to be independent of the government and authority of the Apostles, who were the first Rulers, or of those who were chosen to assist then in ruling the Church, and to succeed them in the oversight of the various Congregations and those who served in them. Congregational independency was never permitted to exist in the Church of the Apostles, or in the Primitive Church after their time. There was but one rule, that of the Apostles, and those chosen by them to govern the Church. To admit any other rule would at once open the door to dissension and disorder, from its very nature, as it has been amply shewn, in the previous volume: hence, it is not possible to produce a single instance in the New Testament of any Congregation, or its Minister, being independent of Episcopal rule; whereas numerous instances can be given to prove that they were under the government of the Apostles, and those appointed by them to bear rule.

And so they who take “the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of their rule and practice,” must wholly abandon the system of Congregational or Presbyterian independency. They cannot at the same time profess to be guided solely by the Bible, and still belong to any separate independent bodies, who throw off the rule of Episcopal government ; for in doing this they are going contrary to the will and design of Christ, and to the settlement of the Church by His Apostles ; and to the sacred means originally ordained by them *for maintaining true Christian unity* throughout all generations. If the Apostles would not allow of a single Congregation of Christians or any one preacher of the Gospel to be independent of their rule, but must have them obedient to the Faith and Government of the Church which had been determined upon, still less would they have approved of the present disorganised state of Christian bodies ;—a number of various bodies or communities of Christians in one place, and all differing from one another, and necessarily dividing the Christians into several sections, and thus causing endless dissension, opposition, and ill-will. This would never do ; and they would not only have severely censured these divisions, but have put them down with a strong hand, by the power which the Lord Jesus had given them for ordering and ruling the Church. But it is evident from the order, peace, and unity that existed, as we have shewn, in the infant Church at Jerusalem—though it contained many tens of thousands—that the Apostles acted on a system : and, that one

system alone prevailed. There must have been but one community or one visible body of the Church in one place, because the several Christians living in that place would, naturally, have fellowship with each other, and worship together in the same communion, as one body in Christ: and to have withdrawn from this ordinary communion, or to have created other communities would have been tantamount to leaving the Church, or creating a schism, which the Apostles would not, for a moment, suffer to exist. Distinct Congregations at a distance, or in other places or districts could be still of the same communion; but distinct independent congregations *in the same place, not subject to the same rule, could never be one, or of the same, communion.*

The system, then, which the Apostles adopted evidently *provided for the unity of the Church*; and this also was provided for, that no congregation, no minister whom they had appointed, should be interfered with, or trespassed upon by others, so long as they kept to the faith and rules of the Church. Hence, however numerous Christians became, they were enabled to dwell together in peace and unity; due order and subserviency were preserved everywhere in the Church, throughout the whole city, and in the surrounding country, so that it presented the appearance, to those outside, of a thoroughly united body. It must have been a glorious soul-stirring sight, to behold the vision realized of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven; (Rev. xxi. 2. See Hammond *in loco*); appearing for a certain space at the beginning, as a

sample of what Christ would have His Church to be in every part to which it should extend, and the pattern after which it should ever aim. More bright and of diviner import than the vision which met the eyes of Balaam, when "he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes;" not appearing to his view as a divided confused rabble of people, but all in order, one tribe in one place and another resting peaceably by the side of their brethren, in another, each in its appointed place, without the one interfering with, or trespassing upon, the other; and then taking up his parable and saying, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."

From the injunctions which the Primitive Church regarded as coming from the Apostles, or as based upon the rule which they laid down at the beginning, for preventing disorder and dissension, it was established that one section or branch of the Church, and that one Bishop or Presbyter, should not intrude or trespass upon the ground or jurisdiction of another. (See Apost. Canons, XIV., XV., XVI., also XXXI., XXXII., XXXIII., XXXIV., and XXXV.) A careful consideration of these will strongly corroborate the view that the Apostles had found it necessary, or been instructed by our Lord, to be very systematic in what they did, in order that they might preserve order and unity.

There is, indeed, sufficient evidence to shew that it must have been so; and there is every reason to believe that there was a general principle of action, preserving order, running through the whole organization of the Church from the beginning; the which was made a standing rule for all generations; that no Christian teacher or ruler should enter upon another's sphere or field of duty, or disturb or annoy him in his work, in the training, or the care of souls, to which he had been duly appointed. Of course, exceptional cases would arise, as will happen in the best organized communities, when help or interference will be necessary; and the Bishop or the chief rulers from other parts must step in to correct what is amiss, and for which further provision is made; but the rule in itself was good, stood good, and was of universal application.

Some regard to this rule or principle seems to have been predominate even in the course of St. Paul's teaching, though he was so earnest and devoted an Apostle, that he "laboured more abundantly than they all;" for in writing to the Christians at Rome, he says: "Yea, so have I strived (making it my aim so) to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, *lest I should build upon another man's foundation.*" (Rom. xv. 20.) From which it is clear that no other Apostle had been there as yet. And then observe, that in the previous verse he describes the circuit that he had taken, "*so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ:*" that is, that far and wide in the direction of Illyricum

from Jerusalem, until he came as far as to the borders of the previous country, his Mission had extended: but he adds in the 23rd verse, that he had “no more place in these parts;” from which it is presumed that he could not go into Illyricum and other countries to preach, because he felt that he would be encroaching on the sphere allotted to other Apostles; but having thoroughly compassed the work in those parts it was previously understood that he should take, he was now at liberty to go to them at Rome, and even extend his mission into Spain.

IV.—But turning now to the closing days of the Apostles tarrying together at Jerusalem, before they finally depart to “Go, teach all nations,” according to the command of our Blessed Lord, the important question arises;—“Was the Church *here* left without any provision for its government? or, was it left in the hands of the Elders to govern the Church among themselves as they thought fit? No! It was neither left to take care of itself; nor is there any evidence that the Elders were left alone to govern themselves and the Church, and the Congregations to whom they ministered. What then, was the order of things, as the Apostles left them, when they could no longer be present to guide and control the various affairs that required their attention; and which without some supervision would be sure to go wrong? What did the Apostles do? What arrangements did they institute and uphold, for the preservation of order and unity? This is the crucial point, which calls for most careful consideration.

Things must not be allowed to come to nothing, or fall into disorder. And again we ask, What did the Apostles do? Why this, they undoubtedly established *Diocesan Episcopacy*. It is natural to suppose that they had long before contemplated the time when they must go forth and leave the Church which they had established here by their united counsel and labours. And it is natural to believe that they often talked the matter over, and as sensible men, if nothing more, they did not separate without having made some definite settlement, and order for the future government of the Church here and elsewhere. This indeed they did. And they made the *beginning at Jerusalem*, which was to be the model and pattern of every other Church that was planted, and brought to completion elsewhere. Also from this we are to understand, that no Church of Christ — where there were several Congregations of Christians in any part which had severally ministers appointed to serve them—should be without a Bishop over it. They were all to be united under him. He was to be the chief Pastor or ruler under Christ, to whose ordering the Clergy and members of the Church must submit themselves: obeying them that were over them in the Lord. If the Clergy desired the people under them to attend to their instructions, and be guided in the way of Godliness by them, they also must shew them an example by attending to the directions of him who was set over them in the first instance by the Apostles, to whom the Lord had intrusted the appointment of all such matters in His Church; and afterwards

to those whom they had consecrated to succeed them as rulers, in other parts or Dioceses of the Church.

It is probable from what is stated by some of the Apostles and early Fathers that the Apostles had received some direct instructions from Christ about the matter, if even He had not indicated the appointment of the person who was to be the first Bishop for Jerusalem : and without doubt they were guided in what they did by the Holy Spirit. So that considering that Christ had previously given them all power and authority in His Church for settling its constitution, as well as giving them instructions how to proceed, it cannot but be concluded that the original settlement of Bishops made by the Apostles to succeed them in bearing rule in the Church of Christ, *was of Divine appointment*. The actual induction of the first Bishop at Jerusalem into office is not mentioned in the New Testament, any more than the first appointment of Elders, or probably the first ordination of Deacons : it was not essential for us to know these things : sufficient that we find one holding the position of Bishop, before the Apostles finally left Jerusalem ; one whose position as head and ruler, the Apostles not only approved and supported, but whom they looked up to as such. They gave him the countenance of their authority, and were enabled to see him fully established in this exalted position before they had all finally departed ; so that nothing was wanting on their part to secure for him the respect and submission of the Clergy and Brethren they left behind them in the Mother Church.

We gather this from the allusions made to James, the first Bishop, in the Acts, and in early Ecclesiastical History. Thus St. Peter, when delivered out of prison, said, "Go, show these things *unto James*, and to the Brethren." (Acts xii. 17.) But why is James mentioned, unless it was that he held a peculiar and elevated position in the Church of Jerusalem? And this is indeed confirmed by what is said of the same individual in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, where he is spoken of as the President of the Council, in which Apostles themselves spoke, and who afterwards brought the discussion to a conclusion, evidently in an authoritative manner, by saying, "Wherefore *my sentence is*," &c. (v. 19.) Why should he have this position, unless he had been at the head of the Church at Jerusalem, and recognised as such by the Apostles? Many years afterwards St. Paul again goes up to Jerusalem, and we read that the day after his arrival, he "*went in unto James*, and all the Elders were present;" and gave a report of all that God had wrought by his ministry. (Acts xxi. 18.) This passage has been already adduced in proof of their being Elders at Jerusalem: it is now quoted as evidence of the distinction that is made between them and James; where the latter is represented as Bishop surrounded by his Presbyters, or *Concilium Episcopi*.

St. Paul thrice alludes to him, in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he is, in all three places, spoken of as a person of some moment. Thus, when speaking of an early visit to Jerusalem, when he saw St. Peter,

St. Paul adds, "But other of the Apostles saw I none save James, the Lord's Brother." (i. 19.) From which, indeed, it is concluded by some, though probably erroneously, that he was one of the Twelve, but not James the brother of John, who had been killed with the sword. (Acts xii. 2.) Again, St. Paul, speaking of those who seemed to be pillars of the Church, and gave to him the right hand of fellowship, he places this James before St. Peter and St. John. (Gal. ii. 9.) Then reference is again made to him, by St. Paul alluding to those who represented themselves as coming *from James*, as if they came from one having authority in the Church at Jerusalem. (Gal. ii. 12.)

Other divines are inclined, however, to think that James the Just *was not one of "the Twelve,"* because there were others, besides them, who were called Apostles, as Paul and Barnabas; and if James the Just were another, then the sense of the passage would not be violated by the belief that he was not one of "the Twelve." Observe, he is in the passage called "the Lord's brother." In the List of the Apostles, in Acts i. 13, the names of the eleven, before the election in the place of Judas, are given; and there are two James's enumerated, James the brother of John, and James the son of Alphæus; and therefore he might have been the latter. But there is this obstacle in the way, that in the following verse the brethren of the Lord are mentioned *as distinct from the eleven*, and as being present on the occasion, in the upper room, with "Mary the mother of Jesus." And therefore it seems

improbable that James the Just was one of "the Twelve." Some of the ancient Fathers appear to think that he was not; Jerome, for instance, calls this James the *thirteenth Apostle*, and places him before Paul and Barnabas. And Dr. Hammond says, in his *Treatise Of Imposition of Hands for Ordination*, (sec 23): "Hence it is that this James, *though none of the Twelve*, is called an Apostle." (Gal i. 19.)

In reckoning up the several appearances of Christ after his Resurrection, St. Paul is thought to allude to this James, when he says, "After that He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles;" (1 Cor. xv, 7) as if he were not included in the latter: this is strengthened by reference to verse 5. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which was of very early date, the following incident is recorded: Soon after His resurrection from the dead, the Lord went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord, until he could see Him rising from among them that sleep. . . And the Lord took bread and blessed and brake it, and gave it to *James the Just*, and said to him, 'My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep.' (Jerome, Scr. Eccl. 2.) He is considered, also, to be the author of the Epistle of St. James, which may well be called a general epistle, since he writes to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad." It may be noticed, also, that in the Epistle he gives this direction, as part of his Episcopal charge: "Is any sick among you? let

him call for the Elders of the Church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (v. 14.) Here, the Apostle prescribes one of the duties of the Elders that surrounded him when St. Paul went to see him.

In the record of the Apostolic Church, Eusebius tells us that "This James, whom the ancients, on account of the excellence of his virtue, surnamed the Just, *was the first that received the Episcopate of the Church at Jerusalem.*" And he goes on further to relate that "Clement in the sixth book of his Institution, represents it thus: Peter, and James, and John, after the Ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honour, but chose James the Just as Bishop of Jerusalem." (Eccl. Hist. II. 1.) In another place this historian relates that "the Jews, after Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and had been sent by Festus to Rome, frustrated in their hope of entrapping him by the snares they had laid, turn themselves against James, the brother of the Lord, *to whom the Episcopal seat at Jerusalem was committed by the Apostles.*" (II. 23.) And then follows a deeply interesting account of his martyrdom, which is too long to insert here.

Eusebius, however, gives an earlier testimony than his own, for he adds, "Hegesippus, also, who flourished nearest the days of the Apostles, in the fifth book of his Commentaries, gives the most accurate account of him, thus: "But James, the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of this name, was surnamed the Just by all, from the days of our Lord until now,

received the government of the Church with the Apostles. This Apostle was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and never used a bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woollen, but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, and interceding for the forgiveness of the people; so that his knees became as hard as camels in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before God." (Eccl. Hist. ii, 23.) And in another book, Eusebius says, "*James being the first that received the dignity of the Episcopate at Jerusalem, from our Saviour Himself.*" (vii. 19).

From this, and other passages, it would appear that James had in some manner been designated by Christ for the office, and received it through the hands of the Apostles. This makes it probable, that in this matter, as well as others, the Apostles acted somehow under the direction of Christ; and from all the accounts it seems likely that it was during the earlier years of the Apostles' stay at Jerusalem, rather than only just before their departure, that he was consecrated by them to the Bishopric. It might have been when the other early Evangelists had fled away upon the persecution of St. Stephen, if not sooner, that the Apostles, finding themselves with a large charge upon their hands determined to

organize the Church of Jerusalem on a permanent footing, and as a first step constituted James, as the Bishop, and then that the first Elders should be ordained by him, as their head, the other Apostles being present and laying on their hands also, to signify their approval and sanction : so that the Elders might be obedient and submissive to him, through whom they had received authority to exercise their ministry.

By this organization, including the Deacons as well as the Presbyters, the principle involved in the will and design of Christ seemed to be carried out—that while no single individual should be Head over all the Church, but Christ Himself, there should be still, in every complete portion or section of the Church everywhere, some one holding rule under Him, as His representative ; and responsible to Him, and to the Church for the good government of those committed to his charge. And that under each separate Ruler or Bishop there should be a staff of both Elders, or Priests, and Deacons to assist him in the ministry, and under his jurisdiction. This seems to have been the pattern shadowed forth in Christ's ministry, as before stated, when He Himself was the sole Head, and had both "the Twelve" and "the Seventy" to assist Him : even as Christ's ministry was formed in principle after the Jewish ministry, with its High priest, Priests, and Levites ; and, the which the Apostles had now settled upon, and purposed to carry out whenever and where-soever they planted the Church in its completion. And still further settled, that while the Bishops should be

severally independent in their own respective sphere and jurisdiction, they should be associated with other independent Rulers in Dioceses around them; and so still form a College or Court of Governors, to whom they should each separately be subservient, as it had been with the Apostles: and thus a body or college was constituted for all time, like the Apostolate to direct and control the whole Church, in every several and particular part of the world, according to the original Constitution.

It was as if the Apostles had said among themselves before they separated: "this is the model we must everywhere work after, and endeavour to attain to; there must be one and the same rule administered by all of us, that the Church may in all places be one and the same, so that Christians throughout all the world may be united in one body, as our Blessed Saviour so earnestly prayed for. At first we must preach and gain converts as we have done at Jerusalem, and when the Christians are added to the Church, and as need require, we must ordain Elders and Deacons to assist us in all places, keeping the superintendence of all things and persons in our own individual hands so long as we are able; but when no longer able to do this, let us make some proper provision—let us never give up any Church over which we have severally spent so much pains, and watched over so long, without leaving behind us one that shall exercise the chief rule in our place." And therefore it is only towards the close of the ministry of the several Apostles, that we must expect to find

the organization of the Church permanently completed in various places. But that Diocesan Episcopacy was everywhere established in the Church, from the very time of the Apostles, and by them, there can be little doubt when we consider the abundant testimony in support of it: and, that it was of Divine appointment, is sufficiently clear also from the fact that the Apostles constituted the Church by a commission from Christ, and under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And this, the more it is considered, seems to be *the basis on which true Christian unity is to be founded and maintained*. It was devised for this purpose by Christ and His Apostles, as we have seen; it has all the elements for the preservation of unity; and if honestly adhered to is well calculated to effect this blessed end. It must not be spoken of in competition with other schemes, or systems that have been tried, for it is the one only means that has been divinely appointed. And if we do not follow this, how can we expect to find the unity of Christians, such as Christ our Lord would have it? A further consideration of Scripture testimony, will only strengthen us in the belief that it is *the basis of unity* by which all true Christians should abide. I will close this chapter with a striking passage from St. Augustine with regard to this means of unity: "The root of Christian Society, (*Radix Christianæ Societatis, &c.*)" he says, "is diffused by a certain propagation through the world, by the seats of the Apostles, and the *succession of Bishops.*" (Ep. 44.)

CHAPTER XX.

ST. PAUL'S TESTIMONY RESPECTING THE BASIS OF TRUE CHRISTIAN UNITY.

HOWEVER much distorted and set at nought by divisions and dissensions, it was without doubt the will and design of Christ that there should be unity in His Church, and that His believing people everywhere on the face of the earth should be as one body. And guided by His instructions, and by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it is generally admitted without question, that the Twelve Apostles laid the foundation of it — or organised a scheme of government, for the express purpose of adequately attaining and securing this unity. All things in the fragmentary records of their acts amply prove this — as their ready and strict obedience to Christ in certain particulars, their constant acknowledgment of His presence with them, and their earnest desire to know what He would have them to do, even though they might otherwise have taken a very different course.

And now we come to the corroborative testimony of St. Paul. His teaching is remarkable for his forcible illustration of several great principles of the Gospel of Christ ; and among these the unity of Christ's Church stands out prominently as the will and design of the Lord ; the which he strives to enforce and inculcate with all the ability and influence he can exert. And, what

is the basis of this unity that he takes ? Is it some new scheme of his own devising ? Does he begin another religious body of his own ? No. Though an acute and profound reasoner, learned, and of a leading mind, as those best able to judge of him allow, he does not attempt anything of the kind. He purposely eschews it ; and instead, deliberately, and unreservedly takes the foundation of the Church as laid down by the Apostles at Jerusalem, or the Constitution of it as framed by them, as his guide and model : and works on the same lines with them, as in the same body with them, while he labours most diligently with them, though in another part, to develope, in accordance with the fundamental principles they had settled upon.

The value of this testimony will be seen by taking note of two or three things.

It should be particularly noticed that St. Paul, though not one of "the Twelve," nor having had any hand in founding the Church at Jerusalem, was yet Divinely appointed by God to be an Apostle. He constantly calls himself an Apostle, is acknowledged as such, and gives evidence of having divine authority as an Apostle by the miraculous signs which he manifested in support of it. He was in one sense independent of the twelve Apostles : he had not received his Apostleship through them, but directly from God. This is his contention in writing to the Galatians. He begins the Epistle with these words, "Paul, an Apostle—not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Nay more, the Gospel

which he preached he had not received from "the Twelve"; he had not learned it through them: "But this I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" (Galatians i. 11, 12.) And "when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

And in support of this, and to shew that he gained his knowledge of the Gospel, as well as his authority as an Apostle from another and a higher source, he continues: "Neither went I up to Jerusalem *to them that were Apostles before me*; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus," so that he went far away from them, and for some time held no communication with any of them. "Then after three years," which he seems to have spent in retirement and prayer, he says, "I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." There was evidently some purpose in this, and it was probably that he might learn from St. Peter something definitely about the Constitution of the Church which he and the other Apostles had founded in Jerusalem. The tenor of the context forbids us to think that it was for the object of obtaining any authority from him, or learning what the terms of the Gospel were. "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (i. 15-19.) Also in writing to the Ephesians, whom he speaks of

as "you Gentiles," he says, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the Grace of God, which is given me to you-ward : how that *by revelation He made known unto me the mystery* ; as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

And yet observe, that the Gospel which he had received *was the same* that the Apostles and first preachers at Jerusalem had received, and had endeavoured to establish in planting the Church there ; for St. Paul continues, in speaking of "the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit : that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of *the same body*, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel : whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power." (Eph. iii. 1-7.) The Apostles officially recognised this great truth under the illumination of the Holy Ghost (Acts xv) ; but St. Paul was called, more than the rest, to translate it into life, and to defend it against all gainsayers. (Olshausen.) His labours and writings shew this.

And at the same time notice, that notwithstanding St. Paul was not indebted to "the Twelve" for his Apostleship, since he did not derive it from them, but had his authority from God, and reckoned himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostle," still his authority as an Apostle is not questioned by "the

Twelve;" on the contrary, he is recognised and acknowledged *by them* as having obtained part in the ministry with them, and being of equal rank: for says St. Paul, "when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." (Gal. ii. 9.) Yea, he felt himself of sufficient authority to rebuke one of these pillars of the truth afterwards: for "when St. Peter was come to Antioch" (the centre of St. Paul's mission work,) "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." (v 11.) So that he sufficiently shews that he had an independent mind and position of his own.

And then observe further, that though he was not subject to them, or subordinate, and began his Apostleship some years after "the Twelve," at another centre, some distance from Jerusalem; and reckoning himself an Apostle of the Gentiles, as they were of the circumcision, yet St. Paul does not go about to establish a new order of things, or set up another Constitution for the Church, different to what "the Twelve" had settled and founded in Jerusalem: but he takes the foundation they had laid as exhibiting the mind and purpose of Christ regarding His Church; he takes that Church, therefore, not only *as the model* after which he must order other Churches of his own planting among the Gentiles, but he looks upon it *as the same Church* which He is extending, and adding to; as all being under *one Head and Lord*. He has not, therefore, to consider and set up a new system

for the Gentile Christians: there is one already settled, one for him to work by, one whereby the Gentiles may be united with the Jews *in one body* in Christ; and be "fellow-heirs" with them, "and *of the same body*," as it is stated in the above quoted passage. There is no need of another basis of union among Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, than that which "the Twelve" had framed. St. Paul does not seek after any other, he will not have any other.

The force of the Apostle Paul's observations in the Epistle to the Ephesians, from which the above passage is taken, should be attentively considered, Towards the close of the first Chapter he speaks of God having exalted Christ, and having put all things under His feet, and "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." In the next Chapter he shews us how both Jews and Gentiles have, in Christ Jesus, been reconciled unto God *in one body*; and that "*through Him* we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Hence he assures the Gentile Christians, to whom he is writing, in those expressive words:—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and *are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*," already marked out, and laid down at Jerusalem as a beginning; "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner Stone; in whom *all the building* (it is still *one*, though the Gentiles have been admitted,) fitly framed together, groweth unto *an holy temple in the Lord*. In whom ye also are

builded together for *an habitation of God through the Spirit.*" (Eph. ii. 16-22.) A passage of great beauty, the sense of which comes out the more it is well thought over; for observe how the Apostle heaps up metaphor after metaphor, to impress upon his converts the fact, that they were pledged to true Christian unity when received into the Church, and added to that building of which Christ is the chief corner-stone. In the next Chapter St. Paul again speaks of the Church—including both Jews and Gentiles—as "the whole family" of God, named after Christ, to whom they are joined. (Eph. iii. 15.)

But one of the most favourite and forcible metaphors he employs is that in which he compares the Church to *the natural body*, and thereby shews its necessary unity. Mark attentively the words, "For as the body *is one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For *by one spirit we are all baptised into one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all *been made to drink into one spirit.*" (1 Cor. xii. 12-13). It is such a body or society of people that its members must severally be properly joined and knit together as parts of the whole, as much as the hand or foot, the eye, or the ear, are parts of the whole natural body. And so all must act together, and all must act in subordination to each other. They have not each separate interests, but it is the one interest of the whole body which must engage the attention of each. They have

not divided wills, but must be guided by the will and mind which rules the whole body. One cannot suffer, but the whole body suffers: one cannot receive a blessing, but the whole body is blessed together. The soul of man is the lord and life of the body, and the Holy Spirit of God is the Lord, and the Life of the body of Christ, which is His Church. And thus St. Paul adds, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" (v. 27.)

Who would for a moment think that the feet of man, unless disabled, would refuse to go to any place that the directing power of the will in the man had decided to go to; or that the hands would not take hold of anything that the spirit in the man willed it to take hold of; or that the eyes, or ears, or tongue, should choose not to exercise their proper office and purpose for which they were made to obey the mandates of the will. Such a thing would not occur, it would be unnatural. And so it ought not to happen in the body of Christ, that members in particular should wish, or attempt to do anything otherwise than as the Holy Spirit has ordered and directed for the whole body, so as to preserve its unity. The very divisions and dissensions of Christians, as such, are a monstrosity, offensive to God, as well as contrary to the design of Christ. The Apostle tells us that God hath so tempered the body together in its several parts; "that there should be *no schism in the body.*" And so it should be in the body of Christ: for God hath so ordered things by the appointment of divers orders in the

ministry of Christ's Church, that it might be so, if His people, who profess to be His followers, would but obey His will, and mind what is told them in His word; for the Apostle concludes his argument on this occasion by showing that for the sake of maintaining unity in the body, "*God hath set some in the Church; first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,*" (v. 28), and other helpers having some special work to do.

St. Paul makes use of the same metaphor also in writing to the Roman Christians, since he says to them, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members *have not the same office*; so we being many, *are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*" (xii. 4, 5.) And so also in his Epistle to the Ephesians, to which we return, for when speaking of the love of Christ for His Church, and His tender solicitude for all its members, he says, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones...*this is a great mystery; but I speak concerning *Christ and His Church.*" (v. 29-32).

Many are his exhortations to the members of the Church in different places, to make constant efforts to preserve the unity of the Church. Let one example of this suffice. Keeping to this Epistle to the Ephesians, from which several quotations have been already taken, he speaks with great force and importunity of their "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the*

bond of peace. There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*, even as ye are called, in *one hope of your calling*: *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 3-6.) It has been observed by a certain writer, that when the Apostle is very much in earnest, he is in the habit of repeating again and again some particular word which he wishes to call our attention to; and he here repeats the word *one* no less than seven times over in one single sentence. Clearly this word is emphatic, and expresses the special thing he is wishing to enforce, which is the *unity of the Church*. It sounds to us like the echo of our Lord's own prayer for His followers the night before He suffered, when He prayed "that they may be all *one*, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be *one in us*." You could hardly read the one without at once thinking of the other. And from it we may certainly gather that Unity among Christians is a thing of no small consequence, and that which every true Christian should endeavour to "keep."

This phrase, "endeavouring to keep the Unity," is enough to show us that Unity is not only of much importance, but that it may also be difficult to keep; for it is not so easy a thing to keep unity in great bodies as it is thought; and under certain circumstances it may be very difficult. People do not need exhorting to *endeavour* after a thing which is perfectly easy, or which they already have in its complete perfection, and without the danger of losing. This

alone is enough to show us that we must not be daunted or disappointed, if we find Christian Unity rather a harder thing to come by and "keep" than we at first expected. St. Paul tries to impress upon us what a great and divine a thing the Unity of the Church is; and by using the words "Endeavouring to keep" he implies that it is a thing towards which, if we honestly do our utmost, then we need not despair, even though we do not perceive our endeavours to be altogether successful. For even though that Unity be not perfectly attained by reason of the defections and perverseness of others around us, we shall ourselves be clear in the sight of God, if we use our best endeavours *to keep it*. Nor ought we to leave off trying, because the perfect standard of Unity, as Christ has set it forth, can never be reached in this world. Just the reverse. As in our own lives we are bidden to strive after perfection, always trying to be better, and never content with the advances we have made; so is it in the case of Unity. It is a duty. It is the duty of every member of the Church. It is the duty of every Christian.

Many Christian people think that it is enough to attend some kind of religious service, trust in Jesus, and try to lead a Godly life, and that it does not concern them to be "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit:" that it may be a matter for great Church Councils or Bishops to think and talk about; but not for Christians in general, not for individual believers living together in a parish or town, for instance. But

this is a great mistake : we cannot take one part of the Bible, and refuse to have anything to do with some other part ; we must take it as a whole, if we would be true Christians. And this “endeavouring to keep the unity,” is a very practical matter. St. Paul speaks of it as *the business of all Christians*, and that however lowly or unlearned they may be, wheresoever they may be placed, even in the remotest parish, they should earnestly strive and pray for it. What was the duty of all Christians at Ephesus, is the duty of Christians elsewhere. Your behaviour must be answerable thereto. You must see that there is nothing in your lives and conduct which goes against this perfect unity of Christ’s Church.

And observe, St. Paul gives us several powerful reasons why we should one and all be “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” “*There is one body* :” it is *already* in existence, it has been constituted for Christians: you belong to it ; your spiritual interests are bound up with it, therefore you should not forsake it for any other combination of Christians, or do anything to weaken the bonds of it ; you are doing harm to that body of which you are members. And why does the Apostle add: “And one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ?” Even this: that as you hope for salvation, you must all *be animated by One Spirit*, which is, as it were, the soul of that one body of Christians.

And so also when he adds, “One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all,” he virtually

says, You have one and the same Lord Jesus to whom you owe allegiance and obedience, who *earnestly desires you to be at one with your fellow Christians*, and must be grieved when you cause, or join in, ought that stirs up division or dissension in His Kingdom. You have one and the same faith, as believing one settled and approved framework of Divine truth, such as "the Twelve" Apostles have proclaimed, and which I, your Apostle, "delivered unto you first of all, which *I also received*." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) The most important articles of which were very early embodied in the Apostles' Creed ; and which candidates for Baptism were required to confess before they received the sacred rite. Hence, there is also this "One Baptism," by which you are admitted to the Church and its privileges ; when you vowed obedience to Christ and those who are appointed over you in the Lord. And finally, you are to endeavour to be of one body, because you have one and the same God who created you, and now owns you as His Children in Christ Jesus. For all these reasons, then, the Apostle seems to say, *you are bound* to be "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." And if you do not, you are proving yourselves to be imperfect, unloyal Christians.

It is not enough to say that you hold by "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, and one God," if you do not heartily and sincerely fall in with what these require of you. What should we think of a soldier who should profess his great loyalty to his Sovereign, but would not obey the regulations of the army that

had been laid down by authority, or would not submit to be directed by his superior officers? Or of a subject who glories in his country, and in being an Englishman, and yet from vain conceit of his own judgment, or for his own private ends, is constantly setting its constitution at defiance? Or of a son or daughter professing love to his or her father, and yet will not conform to his rule, or do those things that would please him? Why, this: that these professions are vain—that it is preposterous and absurd to regard such, as loving children, as faithful subjects, or as loyal soldiers, however much they may be wishful to be esteemed as such. Even so, it shews a faultiness in our Christianity, that we come short of what we should be as followers of the Lord, if we are not thoroughly at one with the body or Society which He designed for His people; and conform ourselves to its Constitution as set forth by His Apostle. The obligations are so many, the ties and bonds so strong, that every true Christian should feel it his bounden duty, not only to avoid in every possible way, everything that causes division and dissension, or imperils the compactness of the body; but to be always “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace,” from love to Christ, and obedience to His will and desire.

And further notice, also, how in this same Chapter the Apostle again shews that Christ has ordained various Orders of ministers in His Church, as a means of promoting the welfare and unity of its members. “*He gave* some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evan-

gelists; and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; (for the thorough compacting or joining together of the saints, as the original implies; as well as training them to newness of life) for the work of the ministry, for the edifying," or, as it is in the revised version, "*unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity,*" or, as in the margin, "into the unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." So that while "speaking the truth in love, *we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted* by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," or, as it is in the revised version, "according to the working in due measure of such several parts, *maketh increase of the body,* unto the edifying (or building up) of itself in love." (Ep. iv. 12, 13, and 15, 16.)

The metaphor of a building—the one used by Christ when he said, "I will build my Church,"—still runs in the Apostle's mind, to keep up the main idea of Unity in the body. But it is evident that the whole scope of the Apostle's argument is to urge and enforce upon us the "endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" the diversity of gifts and graces which the members severally possess must not be the occasion of divisions and strife, but should be one of the strongest bonds of unity when rightly considered, because "unto every one of us is given grace according

to the measure of the gift of Christ," (v. 7) and we all stand in mutual need of the gifts and graces of each other: even of those members that are less honourable and less conspicuous. And so are we to regard the the appointment of divers Orders of ministers in the Church; it is Christ's prerogative, as the Head of the Church to do this: and His end and design was, that by instituting officers of different ranks, the several members scattered up and down in the world might be compacted and knit together, and be kept as one entire body. And he shews the admirable fitness and need of this arrangement for maintaining Unity, if we are to grow up in all things into Christ the Head.

Then consider *the warnings* that St. Paul here and elsewhere gives us against being drawn away from the one body belonging to Christ, and of which He is the Head. We are to be on our guard, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried away by every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." And again, "This I say and testify in the Lord, that ye (who are members) henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind," &c.

Ep. iv. 14, 17.) In which passages observe how he speaks of *those who are not* "endeavouring to keep the unity," or are tempted to leave the body for any other community, *as children*, who have not yet arrived at a clear knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and are therefore fickle and uncertain, and *as ships tossed to and fro without a rudder*, by every wind that blows;

and as little better than the heathen who are unconverted and unenlightened, because like them they walk in "the vanity of their minds." Do not ye join or follow those who separate themselves, nor listen to their teachers, the Apostle seems to say; "for ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard of Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." (verses 20, 21.)

St. Paul is very severe against those who in any wise attempt to destroy or mar the unity of the Church; and speaks out with boldness about those who seem to rend Christ's body asunder; bidding all who would listen to him to have nothing to do with them, but to shun their company. Thus in writing to the Romans he says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (xvi. 17.) To the Christians in another place he writes, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) "For," continues the Apostle, "we hear that there are some *which walk among you disorderly*, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now, them that are such, *we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ*, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. . . . And *if any man obey not our word* by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. iii. 11-14). And yet

observe that the offender is still to be counted as "a brother," and not as an enemy; but a lapsed brother, who should be admonished. (v. 15).

It must also be noticed, that the authority for the *exercise of Discipline* in censuring and punishing offenders, and also in restoring the penitents, which the Twelve had, was afterwards fully claimed and exercised by St. Paul when he entered upon his Apostolate. Such a power in the Church was necessary, and was at the first established and upheld by God. If you call to mind the awful example which "the Twelve," made of Ananias and Saphira, through the power given them by God, when they attempted to deceive the Apostles; as also when St. Peter and St. John sharply reprov'd Simon Magus; so that fear came upon all men, and made them more readily obey their injunctions; so you will recollect how St. Paul punished Elymas the Sorcerer with blindness because of his perverse and malicious opposition of the Gospel, "in seeking to turn away the Deputy from the Faith" (Acts xiii. 8-12), and sternly denounced him. This happened almost at the beginning of St. Paul's labours as an Apostle; and must have been a sufficient proof to all men, that he was sustained in the authority that he used by a higher power than anything human; and would hence give him greater influence with those among whom he laboured, and lead them the more to attend to what he said, and ordered. And so it happened in the case of the Deputy of the country; "Who believed when he saw what was done, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

It may be noted also here, that a writer in the second century states, that Elymas himself afterwards repented and became a true Christian. If this be so, it but confirms what St. Paul says afterwards, that "*our authority, which the Lord hath given us*, was for edification, (building up) and not for your destruction." (2 Cor. x. 8.) Wherein, while asserting that the authority which he exercised was not to injure but to benefit the Church of Corinth, he distinctly claims that *this authority was from Christ*; and we know that it was to be exercised in His name, as an ambassador in His Kingdom: for the passage further shows, since he uses the plural number, that he did not alone possess it, but in connection with others, as one of a body or number of chief officers, who had this right and power. This is another portion of the evidence to satisfy us, in these later days, that the Church order and constitution which the Apostles settled was of Divine origin: and that their words and appointments were confirmed from on high.

The above passage was written in reference to what took place in the Church of Corinth, after what had happened to Elymas: and will more fully illustrate the manner in which the power of Discipline was exercised by the Apostles. A member of the Church in this city had been guilty of incest: he must have been a person probably of some social influence, for those who were left in charge of the Church had not dared to proceed against him. But St. Paul, hearing of this, first censures the members of the Church there,

that they had not mourned, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among them. (1 Cor. v. 2.) From which we may gather that it was the practice of the Christians in Apostolic days to lament over their brethren who fell into open sin: and from the allusion to the offender being taken away from them we may further learn, that it was the custom to separate such from the communion of the faithful.

Since then the Church of Corinth had neglected this duty, St. Paul himself proceeded to pass sentence upon the individual. And it is desirable to notice in what a judicial and resolute manner he acts; just as if another throne in Christ's kingdom had been given to him also, whereon he sat judging that portion of the Israel of God over which he had jurisdiction. Note his words, "I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, *have judged* already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, *with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ*, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. v. 3-5.) The Apostle evidently implies that on this occasion he is acting as Christ's vicegerent and minister, and that this sentence, though pronounced by St. Paul, was passed by the authority and commission he had received from Christ: in whose behalf he felt himself bound to pass judgment. We learn, too, that this sentence was not to be given privately, but publicly, by the Church when

gathered together, that is, it must be delivered before the whole congregation, with whom the offender had been accustomed to assemble, probably by the leading Elder among them, showing that St. Paul still retained the oversight of the Church, and had not yet appointed a Bishop over it. As to the *delivering him to Satan*, whether it was accompanied by some bodily affliction, as in the case of Elymas, or it was marked in some other open way; or, that it only implied his exclusion from the Church, so that none of the faithful should associate with them—this is too long a question for us to enter upon here, nor is it necessary.

Expulsion is certainly insisted upon in the words which follow: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened:" ye as a body are defiled, by suffering this evil doer to remain among you; and only by putting him away can ye become an holy people unto the Lord. And further, exclusion is clearly enjoined in this passage also that follows: "Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them that are without? do not I judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (11-13). This is in accordance with Christ's direction: if he neglect to hear the Church, and will not live as a Christian, "let him be unto thee as a heathen

man and a publican." St. Paul, as a spiritual ruler, enforced this rule. Observe also how he limits his jurisdiction as a judge and governor: he has nothing to do as respects judging or enforcing discipline upon those that are outside the Church's fold; he only exercises his authority over those that are within.

The Corinthian Church obeyed the Apostle's injunction, which proves that they acknowledged his authority as a judge and ruler over them. What effect this censure and punishment had upon both the Church itself in that place, and upon the individual who was put away from them, may be gathered from St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians, where we learn that this discipline had been beneficial to both, that the members of the Church had grieved, and been made sorry by the fall of their brother, and the necessary sentence of deprivation that they had to inflict upon him; and we are informed that the Apostle had deeply shared in their sorrow, in the step he felt compelled to take; for he says, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears." And then we learn also the good effect which the judicial sentence had had upon the individual himself, and that he had thereby been brought to a better mind and a better life; so much so that his banishment need not be continued, "Sufficient to such a man in this punishment which was inflicted of many." And learning that a change had been wrought in the man, the Apostle writes to them and now enjoins them to forgive him and comfort him,

and thereby restore him again to the fellowship of the Church, "lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow," and if not forgiven and reconciled, "lest Satan should get an advantage over us," (verses 4, 7, and 11), by tempting him to despair, defiance, or further misdeeds.

Here, then, we have a graphic description of the Discipline exercised by the Apostle, and the happy result that attended it. Nor is this a solitary instance of the Apostle asserting and declaring his authority. Respecting another matter, this becomes very apparent; the passage of Scripture will both best tell the tale, and shew that the Apostle would not suffer his authority to be set at defiance by certain persons who wished to act independently of him in the Church at Corinth: for he writes: "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with *a rod*, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? (1 Cor. iv. 18-21.)

From another place it seems as if, from "the vanity of their minds," certain individuals had attempted to create a schism among the Christians, by trying to start a community among them independently of the Apostle's rule, and under a rule of their own: and who constantly tried to depreciate the Apostle, and set at nought his authority, "for his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." But the Apostle, "having

a readiness to revenge all disobedience," says to them, "though I should boast somewhat of *our authority which the Lord hath given us*," yet, "such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed, when we are present." (2 Cor. x.) Then he discusses the matter with them: giving them a powerful reason why the Christians among them should continue a united body, since he says: "I am jealous over you with a Godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to *one husband*, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so *your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received, or another Gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." But how can it be the same Jesus, that I preached unto you, through whom you hope to be saved, he seems to say, if you set at nought the authority which He has given? or the same Spirit, if you imbibe another? or the same Gospel which I gave to you, if you are taught to be disobedient to it, in not continuing one people as the Lord desired you to be?

You acknowledge in the Gospel which you formerly received, that Jesus gave authority to His Apostles, as to the ordering of His Church. Are you to acknowledge some other authority? to follow the teaching of others who are opposed to it, and want to establish their own

authority over you? Why should you be so weak and inconstant as to be led away to break up the unity of the Church that existed among you, whilst you continued under my rule? "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostle, though I be nothing. Truly the *signs of an Apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." And yet, "I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, stripes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." For all such evil things will arise, if some among you will not contentedly and thankfully live under that one government or rule which I established among you at the first, and should be seduced to set up another.

"I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time, and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, *I will not spare you*: since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me . . . Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present, I should use sharpness, *according to the power which the Lord hath given me*. Finally, brethren, farewell. *Be perfect*, be of good comfort, be of *one mind*, *live in peace*, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. xi., xii., xiii.) For the word here rendered "perfect," the original notion is, *be well compacted, or knit together*, either *as members of a body*, or as the parts of a building. (Hammond.) Beza says, "The Apostle's meaning is, that whereas the members of the Church were all as

it were *dislocated* and out of joint, they should *be joined together* in love; and should *make perfect* what was amiss among them either in faith or manners."

Such are the Apostle's words towards the close of his second epistle to the Corinthians, respecting maintaining the order and government of the Church in any particular place. From whence it is apparent enough that he is utterly opposed to there being more than one community or body of Christians in any locality or town, however many congregations there may be: for they must all be under one government, or the Christians are sure to become disunited. The Kingdom of Christ *is one*, however so many parts there may be, or however many places there may be where His people meet together for holy worship and instruction. And *the government* of that kingdom *must be one for unity's sake*, and for preserving due subordination and regularity. To originate more than one independent authority or power for the government of a kingdom, is to bring the opposing parties sooner or later into conflict, and destroy the unity of the people; for some will support one of the powers, and be opposed to another; and thus the kingdom, becoming divided in itself, is sure to suffer, if it be not brought to desolation.

But *the source of all authority among Christians is one*, because it comes from Christ; and though this authority, as it comes directly from Him, is distributed among several individuals, who are to bear rule under Him, that His dominion may be "from sea to sea,

and from the river into the ends of the earth," "that all nations may serve Him;" yet, He has so ordained it that it should be *still one every where, and throughout all generations*. The example of the Apostles, and the rule among the primitive Christians, amply prove that this was the case. St. Paul repeatedly appeals to this, that the power of rulership in the Church is from the Lord Jesus; that the Lord Jesus had given this authority to him and others, who were bound together as a holy and Divine corporation, and through whom, according to a settled order or constitution, divinely organized, they were to transmit this authority to others: that there might be *no schism in the body*, however large it became, but that in every part it should be *perfectly joined together in one body*.

As in the exhortations and warnings, wherein he exhibits his power of exercising discipline over the factious and disobedient, so also in the orders or commands which he gave, we perceive how St. Paul regarded himself as being put in trust by Christ with the supreme authority over all the Churches within his jurisdiction, and all the several ministers therein who had the oversight of their several congregations. It seems impossible to read his Epistles through without coming to the conclusion that his power in the Churches which he had planted was absolute. "He exercised, it is true," observes a late thoughtful writer, "this authority with all the love and tenderness of a parent. He never exercised it for selfish purposes or personal ends. He called himself, and he acted as the last of all and

the servant of all. He abused himself. He worked with his own hands rather than be chargeable. He entreated his converts, he implored them; he was with them in meekness and fear, and in much trembling (1 Cor. ii. 3); he even made their prayer a condition of his salvation (Phil. i. 19): but withal this, he never let the reins of power out of his own hands; he never permitted his authority to be called in question, and he allowed no opposition." Observe how in the following instances he speaks as one having authority :—

"I command, yet not I, but the Lord." (1 Cor. vii. 10.) That is, In the command I give you, I am but enforcing the commandments of Christ: this should impell you to entire obedience, and to attend to what is told you without hesitation. Moreover, that we may further learn that the Apostle had authority to command, he makes a distinction in a few verses previous between his giving his counsel and his commanding: for in verse 6, he says: "But this I speak by permission, and not of commandment." And again afterwards, in verse 12, the Apostle makes a distinction between what the Lord has commanded, and what he bids to be done on his own authority, though, still as the Apostle of Christ, saying, "And to the rest speak I, not the Lord:" and then gives several *orders* about the married state: and concludes with these words: "And so ordain I in all Churches." (v. 17.)

Again, St. Paul gives another order: "Concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order

to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye." (1 Cor. vi. 1.)

Writing to the Thessalonians he says : "We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you." (2 Thes. iii. 4.) And in verse 10, the Apostle says : "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you : " and again in verse 12, speaking of those who walk disorderly among them, and do not conform to the regulations laid down, but are busy-bodies, he says, "Now them that are such *we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Besides, notice many other directions and reproofs which he gave as one having authority : such as forbidding a brother going to law with a brother, and that before unbelievers ; about not eating things offered to idols ; about the reverent manner of receiving the Holy Sacrament ; about the manner of worshipping in their assemblies — the women praying with their heads covered, the men with their heads uncovered, and at all times not to wear long hair ; and such like.

And it is to be observed further, that St. Paul not only demanded respect and obedience to his own orders, but required all faithful Christians to respect, and submit themselves to, *those ministers who had been lawfully ordained*, and sent by him to have charge over them. Thus, in speaking of those who have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints, his words are : "That ye submit yourselves to such, and to everyone that helpeth with us, and laboureth ;

therefore acknowledge ye them that are such." (1 Cor. xvi. 16, 18.) So, also in writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer speaks very plainly after this manner : "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for their souls, as they that give account, that they do it with joy and not with grief ; for that is unprofitable for you." (xiii. 17.)

These words speak for themselves. The principle of obedience is that which runs through all ranks ; and is as much opposed to unruly conduct, factious contention, and bitter feuds, as light is from darkness.

CHAPTER XXI.

ST. PAUL'S TESTIMONY TO THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH CONTINUED.

FROM what has been said in the previous Chapter there can be little doubt but that St. Paul was an Apostle, and exercised his authority as such, as fully as any of the Twelve Apostles. He did not derive his authority, or the Gospel that he preached from them, but directly from Christ Himself; and, therefore, he was not subject to them, but had an independent authority; nevertheless he exercised it in union with them, as a fellow Apostle in one and the same body; and he thus acted evidently from the revelation of the will and design of Christ which had been given to him.

St. Paul undertook a wider sphere of labour than any of them severally did. He not only gave proof of his power as an Apostle, and was widely acknowledged as such by the various Churches he had planted, which submitted to his direction and authority; but he was acknowledged and warmly welcomed by the other Apostles that were before him, as a fellow-helper in the same body or Spiritual Society. He not only laboured more abundantly than they all; but more than they all, he became the great expounder and upholder of the unity of the Church. From him we learn much more of the Church system, and how it was governed, than from all the rest; though at the same time we learn that he was thoroughly

at one with them in maintaining the one definite Constitution of the Church which had been divinely settled, through the instrumentality of the Twelve at Jerusalem ; and that this Divine Society was to be the means designed by God for securing the fulfilment of Christ's earnest prayer for the unity of His Church ; so that all His believing people, being joined to Him, might be one visible body in Him, as their only Head.

As an upholder of the unity in the Church of Christ it was manifested in a two-fold manner, first, in the exercise of his Episcopacy over the Churches he planted ; and secondly, in keeping up an intimate union, agreement, and communion with the other Apostles, as *one with them* in governing the whole body of Christians. This is the two-fold position, too, held by every Bishop within the Church. St. Paul, in the administration of his Episcopacy, sought diligently to get all Christians to live at peace among themselves, to be of one accord and of one mind, thankfully keeping up their union with that great spiritual Society of which they had been made members, when united to Christ their Saviour ; to submit themselves one to another in the fear of the Lord, according to the rules or Constitution of the Church : to shew a ready obedience to those who were appointed over them in the Lord ; to avoid all differences and divisions, all temptations to separate themselves into other bodies, or to follow other teachers who had not been regularly appointed over them : so that the same ways, the same ordinances, and the same doctrines should be held in every one of the Churches under his care, and wherever the Christians

lived together in any village or town; that by this means a uniformity of the body within his jurisdiction might be thoroughly well maintained; and the signs and reality of unity might be the more apparent and the more sensibly felt among them all.

And then on the other hand, St. Paul, as the head and chief ruler under Christ within his province, was at the same time a connecting link, through the other Apostles, who had given to him the right hand of fellowship, with every other part of the Church. He was of one accord and of one mind with them on all essential matters concerning the government of the Church, and its Constitution: they as well as he carrying out one and the same policy, working on the same lines, building after the same model in every place wheresoever they preached the Gospel in different parts; whereby the Unity of "the Holy Church, throughout all the world" became more visible, and was the better secured and maintained. They were acting with one accord together under Christ, who had joined them together as the ruling body in the Church; they were as the joints and ligaments of the natural body, whereby the several parts of the Spiritual body were fitly kept together, and supplied, and ordered alike, "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying (or building up) of itself in love."

The same Episcopal supervision and authority which St. Paul carried out and exercised seemed to have been the same as that maintained by the other Apostles in

their several jurisdictions. While preaching the Gospel and planting the Church; it was his special care to guard the unity of the Church everywhere, warning its members of the danger of being drawn away, or being separated from the body, under any plausible pretext whatsoever. And by the exercise of discipline which he felt empowered to use as an Apostle, he put down with a strong arm all attempts to bring division and strife into the Church. He would not suffer the Church he had planted in any part to be broken up into sects, by any ministers taking charge of Christian Congregations, who would not acknowledge him as their superior, and be subject to his authority. He stopped the evil at the commencement, and firmly resisted those who instigated division; and boldly proclaimed that the Christians within his jurisdiction would not be allowed to remain in the body, if they disputed the authority which the Lord had given.

And there is good reason to believe that the other Apostles also exercised in like manner, in the countries where they severally went to preach the Gospel, baptize, and plant the Church, the same Episcopal supervision which St. Paul exercised over the Churches in his jurisdiction. As for example; St. John, in his third Epistle, intimates as much, when speaking of what happened in one of the Churches within his jurisdiction; for he mentions one "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them," that is, among the members of the Church in that place, and "receiveth us not." Meaning, that he refused to recognise St. John's authority, or to attend to his

admonitions, about which he "wrote unto the Church." Diotrephes was evidently one of those puffed up with a sense of his own importance, and wanted to rule in the Church independently of the Apostle St. John. And to this end he had dared to undermine his authority, if not his character, "prating against him with malicious words:" and further, had taken upon himself the unwarrantable liberty of not receiving the brethren that had been sent as "fellow-helpers of the truth;"—St. John's colleagues—but even went so far as to forbid those that would, and actually to cast them "out of the Church," if they did. If ever there was a case that called for interference of authority, and prompt punishment, this was one; or it would put an end to all unity in the Church there, and to the Episcopal oversight which St. John exercised. He therefore wrote sharply, saying, "Wherefore if I come," should it be eventually necessary, "I will remember the deeds that he doeth:" meaning that he will reprove, if not chastise him, by deposing him altogether from the office which he holds, and exercises so arbitrarily. And St. John writes as if he had the power: as well as St. Paul and the other Apostles.

They are, therefore, to be condemned who teach that Christians have "a free right of organization," that is, to form or join any other organization than that which the Apostles instituted. For this there is no warrant in the New Testament. It is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which teaches us everywhere that the Lord's people in all generations are to

be one body, one large family; and though not now confined to one people—the Jews—but to embrace all nations, and to gather out from them those that believe in Jesus, it is to form them into one body or organization, and not into two or many. And to preserve this unity neither St. Paul nor any of the other Apostles would suffer Christians within their respective jurisdictions to form any other organization than that of the Church; for they well knew that it was the only means, and the divinely appointed means for keeping them together *as one body in Christ*; and therefore they strenuously resisted every attempt to create a schism, through men who wanted to have a pre-eminence, or wished to bring themselves into notice.

If any one might have formed another body, struck out a new line of action, established a new order of things, fashioned a new basis for unity, or created another kind of ministry for the Church, different from the other Apostles, it was St. Paul. He was an independent chief in the Church as well as they; he had been divinely appointed to be an Apostle, by a direct mandate from the Holy Spirit, without any commission from “the Twelve;” he was consecrated to bear Christ’s name *to the Gentiles*, while they, especially at the first, laboured among the Jews; their spheres of labour were different; a strong feeling of antagonism existed between the two people. St. Paul had had visions and revelations from the Lord; he had been caught up to the third heavens, and had heard unspeakable things; he was “in nothing behind the very chiefest Apostle;” and

so might have been tempted to originate another and an independent body of his own, different from the other Apostles, if he had been vainly puffed up, and had not sufficiently regarded the will of Christ. But led by the Spirit of God, and being obedient to his Lord, who had called him to be an Apostle, he did no such thing.

He had, "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," grasped the great and divine principle of the unity of the Church; that it must be one and the same body everywhere, and must be formed after the same pattern; that there must be one basis whereby true unity might prevail among all Christians; and that this basis had been already laid down and established by the Twelve Apostles that were before him. Hence he said, "Other foundation can no man lay *than that is laid*, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) And again, "*Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.*" It was of the living Temple that the Apostle speaks, as the context shews, of which they became a part when joined to Christ as He had ordained: "In whom," as St. Paul continues, "ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20—22.) St. Peter had also grasped the same idea, when he says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) The beginning or foundation of which, according to the direction of Christ, had been laid at Jerusalem, as agreeable to the prophecy in the ancient Scriptures: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious," which St. Peter

here quotes (v. 6), so that these two great Apostles hold the same view on this great measure.

Therefore is St. Paul scrupulously careful that there shall be no essential difference between himself and the other Apostles, in either the doctrines, or the administration and constitution of the Church; lest it should be thought that he was starting another body of Christians for the Gentiles. The Faith which he preaches is identical with theirs; he adopts the same principles of action, and follows on the same lines they had marked out. He keeps to the same organization, the same system of Church Government which they had; so that the Churches under his care shall be one and the same as those planted by the other Apostles elsewhere. And he does this, he acts thus—as far as we may judge from his own words—because he recognises in what they had done, and the various arrangements they had made, the foundation of Christ's kingdom in the world, which he was not at liberty to vary or change. For to do this would have been sacrilegious in his eyes; and as if he were committing an act of treason against His Lord and Saviour, bringing confusion and dissension into His kingdom; as if he were touching the ark of God in an unhallowed manner; altering the character of that building wherein Christians, being knit together in one body, were to grow up into an holy temple in the Lord.

The Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles seem to be written on the very principle or understanding

that the unity of the Church existed in every part, and between every part of it ; that as the Christians dwelling in any village or town should be one body or society, so the Christians in different countries, of different races, and of different conditions, however distinguished or otherwise separated from one another, should be one body in Christ Jesus : that St. Paul was one with the other Apostles in their design, work and object ; that together they were the chief officers in the same kingdom of Christ, which was one, however widely extended ; which they were severally endeavouring in their separate spheres to establish and set up. The writer of the Acts does not attempt to give a regular account of the Constitution of the Church as laid down by "the Twelve" whilst they continued at Jerusalem. It was not his purpose to do so, it was not needed, because it was already known and understood by those to whom he wrote ; and it is only in the brief narratives which he records that we incidentally learn and perceive that it was well and regularly established, according to the design of Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The first portion of the Acts gives us a few important and precious details about the commencement of the Church, its unity, and its government by "the Twelve ;" chiefly what was done by St. Peter in concert with the other Apostles. Then having completed their work, it would appear as if they had severally gone forth into all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature according to Christ's command,

and so extend His kingdom. And the sacred writer says little or nothing more about them, but occupies himself with the labours and doings of St. Paul and his companions, whom he regards as carrying on one and the same work with them; so that if we desire to obtain fuller information about the Constitution of the Church, and the divinely appointed order of things, from which we must not depart, we must look to the rest of the Acts. If in one part the accounts seem meagre, obscure, not detailed enough, or some points left unexplained respecting which we want more light; we are to look to other parts of the sacred writings, to ascertain further what we desire to know: for not only are the several parts of the Acts, but the several portions or books of the New Testament undoubtedly to be read together, and to be taken and understood as a whole. This is particularly the case in reference to St. Paul's writings. He was, as we have seen, divinely appointed to be a fellow Apostle with those to whom Christ at first gave the commission, and in addition to them to labour in the same body and society. The College of the Apostles at Jerusalem cordially accept and acknowledge him as one of themselves; and he on his part loyally accepts his position as one of them, to carry on the Saviour's kingdom on the same lines or system which they settled upon, and to teach the same truths; and so he acts and writes accordingly, so that what information we do not find in one part we find in another; and by putting and taking them together, as it is designed,

as parts of the Word of God, which is one also, we gain a more complete view of the entire building or construction of the Church of Christ.

After the initiatory work of preaching the gospel and making disciples, we see how St. Paul binds the Christians in each place together, in one and the same body or society, and appoints certain persons to watch over them and minister to their spiritual necessities ; and as the number in any one place increases, appointing others to help in this work ; still preserving the unity of the whole, in any one place, and with every other place within the jurisdiction, by keeping in his own hands the oversight and control of all the Churches, of all the ministers and of their Congregations, so that no congregation or minister stands alone or independent, but in union with the Church, not only in the place where they severally are, but with the Church in other places, by being under the direction of one, even himself, as their Bishop or ruler. And this example is to serve us as a specimen of the manner in which the other Apostles acted, who were first appointed, when they went forth to make disciples in all nations : since one uniform rule or system was observed by all alike. All recognise one kind of government, all carry on their ministry on one and the same principle, the *Apostolic rule*, which includes what was truly Episcopal, and was eventually merged into what is now acknowledged as Diocesan Episcopacy.

In the Church at Jerusalem we certainly find Elders in office, but there is no information as to how

they were appointed, or whether they were ordained by the Apostles, or by St. James alone, or what part they took in the ministry, or whether they were under the control and direction of the Apostles or of any one else whom they appointed, though from the incidents which are given, we judge that they were. But the work and position of Elders is cleared up in the account given of St. Paul's labour, where we find that they were solemnly appointed by the two Apostles (Barnabas being the other), to minister to the Saints in various places, where a number of Christians resided. These matters are set at rest by the records given of these two Apostles, for very early in their work the report of their proceedings states that : "When they had preached the gospel in that city (Derbe) and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. And when *they had ordained them Elders in every Church*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 21-23.) And then they passed on to other places.

That there were several Elders in one city, and that they were still, after many years, subject to St. Paul, obeyed his directions, and received his counsel and admonitions as their chief ruler, is evident from the Apostle sending to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus and bidding them to come to him at Miletus.

(Acts xx. 17-38.) He gathers them together as a Bishop does his clergy in these days, and delivers to them his charge.

Besides being subordinate to the Apostles, it is also clear that these Elders *were not laymen* in the Church, but that they had been appointed to a sacred office, of which he reminded them in the following most solemn manner: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood." In this passage both the personality of the Holy Ghost and the Divinity of Christ are woven into the very texture of the Scripture. But what should be especially noticed is, that the Apostle does not so much allude to the outward instrument through whom they were appointed and ordained to the sacred office of Elder, but to the Holy Ghost as the efficient agent,—"The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Hence those who are ordained must always look to the Divine spiritual source from which they receive grace and authority to teach in the Church of God, as well as to the Bishop through whom the Holy Spirit acts. But still they must not neglect the outward means, any more than lose sight of the Divine power, because it has been ordered that through the one, the other is to be rightly received: for so hath the Lord ordained; that they must be sent by those in the Church, whom Christ appointed to send others in His name, for "no man taketh this honour on himself."

Then notice the object of their office, the purpose for which they were made "overseers," they are "to feed the Church of God:" they are to give "to all the flock" (still *one*, though there may be many congregations), their spiritual food in due season, by diligently preaching the pure Word of God, and duly administering the Sacraments, as Christ has ordained. Their office is, moreover, greatly magnified, and their work accounted of great moment, by their being reminded that the flock over which they had been made "overseers," is the Church of God, which had been purchased by the costly Blood of Christ, who died to save them. Besides "feeding the Church of God," they are to take heed to it, and watch over it, in their several respective spheres, that no harm come to any of the flock. This is needful everywhere: and in their case there was special danger; "for," St. Paul adds, "I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch."

Hitherto by the exercise of his Apostolic authority, he had been able to keep down any attempts to rend or scatter the flock; but when he gave up his charge, this would be the signal for those who "loved to have the pre-eminence," or who "were vainly puffed up in their fleshy mind," to usurp authority, to assert a position they were not entitled to, and that they might be independent of any one above them, to do

as they like, to seduce Christians to join them, to set up other communities, where they might teach any new doctrine, and establish another kind of Church government, according to their fancy. The consequence of which would be to divide the flock, disconnect them from their duly appointed pastors, though they kept up union with the Church at large, as well as in the place where they dwelt. And because this would effectually destroy the peace and unity of the Church, and would be done from some selfish end, either of ambition or to fleece the flock in some way, St. Paul speaks of them as "wolves entering in, not sparing the flock." And the grievous thing was, that *from among themselves* some should arise, "speaking perverse things," things contrary to the established faith or rule of the Church: and by their fair speeches and cunning ways, gain adherents from those who were bound up in the fellowship or rule established by the Apostles.

It has been noticed by some who are anxious to support a view not entertained in the Church for many centuries, that the word "overseers" really means, "Bishops." This is true. The word in the Greek signifies Bishops; and at that time it was not an unfit use of the word, since they were appointed to have the oversight of certain members, or a portion of the flock. A clergyman is in this sense a Bishop. And it is as such that St. Paul speaks of them in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus: "A Bishop must be blameless," &c. But if we only use our common

sense a little, we shall feel satisfied that they were not Bishops in the sense which the term afterwards bore in the Church, and which is now represented by the word: they were not in authority over other ministers, and over a number of congregations, only over their own, and were subject to the authority of another. It is not the title or name they may be called by—which was changeable—but *the office or rank* they bore, for which we contend. For it is clear that as Elders, they were not in the same rank with St. Paul; they were not rulers as he was, but subject to him, and were willing to be guided and admonished by him. He speaks to them certainly as their superior, and as if they were holding a position under him, when he bid them “take heed to yourselves:” this first, or they would not be fit for their sacred office; then, to all the flock. If they had felt that they were in an equal rank to the Apostle, they would have resented such language, but being in a subservient position, as well as greatly indebted to him for what they were, the counsel was obediently received, and came from the Apostle with some weight.

That St. Paul had another Order of ministers of a lower rank to that of the then called Bishops or Elders in his ministry, is seen from his addressing his Epistle to the Philippian Saints, “with the Bishops and Deacons:” showing that there were several of each of these orders at Philippi. And in handing over his ruling power to Timothy at Ephesus, he re-

minded him of the qualifications necessary for a *Deacon*, as well as for an Elder or Bishop.

Thus in the Churches St. Paul planted, we may discern a *threefold ministry*, such as the Twelve Apostles had established at Jerusalem. *He himself*, with the other Apostles ruling elsewhere, forming the *First Order*, and binding the various branches of the Church together as one body : and then under him the two other Orders of *Bishops or Elders, and Deacons*. Nor is it difficult to see the purpose and object that the great Apostle of the Gentiles had in view in thus keeping close to the pattern showed in the Church at Jerusalem ; for, as he expresses it, it is “to make all men to see that the Gentiles should be *fellow heirs*, and *of the same body*, and partakers of His (God’s) promises in Christ by the Gospel.” (Eph. iii. 6.) And in writing to the Christians in another part, he enforces the same view of unity throughout the whole Church, when he says : “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for *ye are all one* in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26-28.)

It is not enough for us to have faith in Christ, and think that if we have this, it is a matter of indifference whether we belong to the body of Christ or to one of the so-called free organisations of Christians : for true faith will lead us to be one with Christ through the Church He built ; and to avoid divisions of any kind, under any pretext whatsoever of zeal,

or purity, or thinking that we may gain more good thereby ; when it is really following our own will and liking, rather than that of Christ our Lord and Saviour.

For the contention “that Christians have” free right of organizing other bodies, is not only a fruitful source of multiplied division, but an offence to Christ, and opposed to the unity and integrity of His Kingdom. If St. Paul had been disposed to magnify himself, and formed another body or community of Christians differing and disconnected from that which “the Twelve” had founded, he might easily have found a pretext for it, in the difference existing between the Jewish and Gentile Christians ; which at one time appeared so great that there was no little danger of a serious division in the Church even under Apostolic rule, by reason of the different views they severally entertained. But St. Paul’s mind was so fully possessed with the persuasion that it was the will and design of Christ that they both—Jews and Gentiles—should be *one in Him*, and so visibly united in one body that the world should witness the unity, that he was anxious and fully determined—so far as he was concerned, and by using his utmost influence—that no division or separation of them into two bodies should take place. And it was because he was fully convinced that “the Twelve” had constituted the Church from the first according to the will of Christ, and had appointed divers Orders of ministers in the Church, for the very purpose of maintaining the unity of Christians, that

St. Paul resolved to follow in their steps, and copy the pattern of the Church they had already established, so that there should be no difference between them and himself, in his ministrations or setting things in order in the Churches he planted. Hence we discern a *threefold order of ministers* in these Churches, that were planted by St. Paul.

Moreover, there is ample proof to shew — did space permit us to go into this important point—that the *Faith* or truth of the Gospel which St. Paul taught, preached, and endeavoured firmly to inculcate upon the Christians under his charge—and which he had received by the revelation of God—was *the self same Faith* which the Apostles at Jerusalem had promulgated, and propagated throughout the world, in preaching the Gospel of Christ. And Christians of all generations are more indebted to St. Paul's writings in unfolding and expounding to them the true doctrine or Faith of the Gospel, than all the other Apostles, though they all laboured according to their several abilities. His Epistles cover a greater space than the writings of all the rest put together.

He was a chosen vessel of the Lord: peculiarly fitted not only to preach the Gospel to the heathen, but to deal with all the subtle questions that might arise to pervert or wrest the Scriptures from their true sense and application: and since the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ had also been specially made known to him “by the revelation of Jesus Christ,” he was in many ways well qualified to confirm and be a

witness to the truth of the Gospel, as it had been delivered by "the Twelve," and also to be a defender of the Faith which they were the first to make known. Moreover, St. Peter in his last Epistle, which was written shortly before his death, appears to have seen and read most of St. Paul's Epistles; he cites him as concurring with him in the coming again of Christ; for bidding them to whom he wrote to "account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation," he adds, "*even as our beloved brother Paul also*, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath also written unto you: as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things (portions of the faith he had touched upon); in which are some things hard to be understood;" requiring no little thought and attention, which they do even to this day to thoroughly grasp, for he enters very profoundly into the points he discusses; but which things, continues St. Peter, "they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter iii. 15, 16). This testimony to the wisdom of St. Paul and to the *divine inspiration* of his Epistles, is specially interesting and valuable as coming *from St. Peter*. Some persons had endeavoured to make him a rival of St. Paul. "I am of Cephas," was said in opposition to others, who said, "I am of Paul." (1 Cor. i. 12.) Moreover, St. Peter had been once prevailed upon by the Judaizing Christians at Antioch, to side with them *in opposition to St. Paul*. (Gal. ii. 11). On that occasion, St. Peter had been openly resisted and publicly rebuked

by St. Paul; and St. Paul had fully recorded the circumstance in one of his own Epistles, to the Christians of Asia; who formed part also of those to whom St. Peter addressed his Epistle. In acknowledging, then, the Epistles of St. Paul to be *Scripture*, and *written by inspiration of God*, he acknowledges them to be *true*, and therefore St. Peter owns that what is therein recorded about himself and his conduct at Antioch is a *true history*, and that he was justly rebuked, "because he was to be blamed." (Gal. ii. 11.)

And here in passing it may well be asked, What can be said about the infallibility of the Popes of Rome, when St. Peter, whose successors they claim to be, owns to *his own fallibility*? What, but that it is a monstrous assumption, which has no foundation or sanction in the Word of God, and is only put forward from ambitious designs to advance the power and dominion over those who can believe in the pretensions of one Pope after the other, to be the sole head of the Church on earth. For this rebuke by St. Paul puts an end also to that shameful fable which the Roman Church has invented, that the plenitude of Ecclesiastical power and jurisdiction was given by Christ to St. Peter: for it is clear St. Peter did not believe in it, or he would not have suffered St. Paul to resist his authority, and put him in the wrong. St. Peter would be the first to deny his Infallibility and Supremacy, as here, in owning the truth of what St. Paul records about him, that he was in error, and needed to be corrected. There is no ill-feeling in St. Peter's mind

on account of St. Paul having once "withstood him to the face," but, as a wise man will love him that rebuketh him, when doing wrong; so St. Peter had learned to esteem the steadfastness and reproof of St. Paul, and to account him as his "beloved brother." They are both drawing to the close of their earthly career, and know full well that they must soon put off this tabernacle of the flesh: they were well known to each other; St. Paul had tarried about a fortnight with St. Peter in Jerusalem at the first: they had met together and severally taken part in the first Council of the Church, over which James, the Lord's brother, presided; and now in the near prospect of having to suffer for the faith of Christ, which they both professed, and had fully and successfully taught, the Apostle of the Circumcision is seen, as it were, standing by the side of the Apostle of the Gentiles; acknowledging him, and bound together with him in the closest bond of fellowship, and proclaiming to the Church throughout the world, and for all generations, that they were of *one mind*; and that their *Faith in Christ was one and the same*.

But, however *well defined the Faith may be*, and so plain that he *who* runs may read, and may know for certain what it is; however clearly revealed and announced in the Scriptures it is, that *there is but one body* or Society for Christians to join and abide in; and however *distinctly the organization of the Church may be traced out*, so that it may be known by the marks which distinguished the early Church as it

eventually came forth from the Apostles,—causes of difference will arise sometimes of great moment, and at other times of lesser importance, but which, nevertheless, threaten to make a breach in the Church, and cause a permanent division or schism; unless they be checked, satisfactorily arranged, or suppressed. And even then, do what you will, try to meet the dissentients as far as you can, without giving up what is essential, you will not always succeed, for there will still be perverse minds, who, loving to have a pre-eminence, and to carry their own views and modes of action, will not scruple to break from the unity of the body, and create other divisions in Christ's kingdom. There is a fruitful supply of them in these days, and they seem to be on the increase. The least difference of opinion in the Faith or Rule of the Church is too eagerly and rashly seized upon, for making a fresh separation, and further dividing the body of Christians; as if the will and design of Christ, as more fully set forth in the settlement of the Apostles, were of no account. They dare to act contrary to the known purpose of Christ: they do not want to be reconciled; or to find the means of reconciliation, that "they may be one" with other Christians in the one body of Christ. They make a conscience of doing what is clearly against Christ's known wish, because their way seems right in their own eyes. Now, instead of taking the law into their own hands, and setting the Constitution of Christ's kingdom at defiance, it is most needful to consider by what means they who are true Christians,

might still *continue as one*, with the original body who retain their fellowship and connection with the Apostles; and whether we have not an example in Scripture, how to proceed in such cases, for settling disputes in the Church, and healing the breach which threatens to rend it entirely asunder. And if we have, whether it is not our wisdom and duty in any serious dissension to follow it, rather than separate from the body.

Such an instance we have brought before us in the Acts of the Apostles, in which St. Paul was intimately concerned, and which was of far more serious import than anything that has since led to the modern divisions among Christians, for it threatened to wholly separate the Gentile Christians from the Jewish, and make of them two distinct bodies instead of their keeping together as one. I refer to what has been regarded as the first Council or Synod of the Church at Jerusalem, mentioned in the fifteenth Chapter of the Acts: and is noted as one of the most important events that happened in the history of the Church during the Apostles' days; and as one of the fiercest contests she ever had for the preservation of her Unity. The event has been previously referred to, to shew the peculiar position and authority which St. James, the brother of the Lord, held in Jerusalem, with the general support of the Apostles: we now refer to it to shew by what means the unity of the Church was maintained, under the most threatening and critical circumstances.

What occurred is very graphically narrated, and may be briefly noticed. A serious contention arose in the Church at Antioch — not Antioch in Pisidia, but Antioch in Syria, another great centre of Church life, next in importance to Jerusalem. It arose from certain Judaizing teachers who came among them from Jerusalem, and insisted that the Gentiles could not be saved through Christ, unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses. To this teaching Paul and Barnabas “gave no place by subjection, no not for an hour;” it was imperiling their liberty in Christ; bringing the Gentiles into bondage; it was an adulteration “of the truth of the Gospel:” and when there “had been no small dissension and disputation with them,” and no signs of coming to an agreement or understanding, the Church at Antioch “determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and Elders about this question;” which was in effect, that one portion of the Church, in a great difficulty, should consult with another, as to what was to be done. And accordingly, when they came to Jerusalem, “they were received of the Church, and of the Apostles and Elders:” and at a preliminary interview “they declared all things that God had done with them,” that is, though they had not become Jews. For the question now, observe, was, not whether the Gentiles should be received into the Church, this had been settled before and acknowledged by St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles as the will of God; but, whether it

was necessary that the Gentiles must become Jews in order to become Christians. For there was a strong party feeling in Jerusalem, especially among the Pharisee section, "that it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, and command them to keep the law of Moses." It was necessary, therefore, to fix a day, when "the Apostles and Elders came together, to consider this matter." And if we attentively consider the order of their proceedings, we shall see that first, the parties most interested on both sides were permitted freely, and as forcibly as they could, to state their respective views: and it is evident that the question was vehemently debated by them. Then, "when there had been much disputing," the assembly appears to have looked to learn what the Apostles had to say on the matter. When St. Peter, who was the Apostle of the circumcision, first "rose up," and gave his reasons, why he thought this yoke should not be laid upon the neck of the Gentile Christians.

"Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul," who were the Apostles of the uncircumcision; who entering upon the question, declared that God had already acknowledged them, though they were not circumcised and had not kept the Jewish law; and that consequently these things were not needful for them. Seeing, then, that the chief Apostles on both sides were unanimous about the matter, St. James, finally, as President of the Council, brings it to a conclusion. For, after showing why he was in full accord with what these Apostles

had stated, he said, "Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." Which carried with it an unconditional condemnation of the Judaizing doctrine; and brought about a settlement of the whole question, that there should be no division between these two sections of the Church, but that they should be *perfectly joined together in one body, and united as such in Christ Jesus.*

Further, we learn that "it pleased the Apostles and Elders, with the whole Church," who approved of the decision, to act upon the suggestion of St. James, and send letters to the different Churches, notifying to them the decree that had been made; and to take all due care that it should be effectually confirmed; for they "send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas," and "wrote letters by them," as St. James had proposed, not only to the Gentiles at Antioch, but to those in "Syria and Cilicia." And thus by their courteous behaviour towards the Gentile Christians,—who felt somewhat aggrieved at what had happened—as well as by the decree which they issued, the Apostles and Elders, and the whole Church, assembled at Jerusalem from different parts, did what they could to avert any separation, to remove any bad impressions that had arisen, and to conciliate the Gentiles, by acknowledging them to be their brethren in the Lord; and that as such they possessed an essential unity and equality with themselves in the Church of God.

And we should notice, further, the high terms in which the Apostles and the whole Church assembled at Jerusalem speak of the two Apostles of the Gentiles; they call them "our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men," they said, "that have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Which is another proof that they gratefully acknowledge all that St. Paul had done; and that they were in entire agreement with him: they approve of his work, and testify that he was one with them in the same body, the Church; and that what he taught, and the system of Church rule and government which he had adopted and endeavoured to carry out, were in accordance with what had been already settled by the Apostles in Jerusalem at the first. This commendation would incline those to whom they wrote to cling all the more to their two Apostles, and obey their godly admonitions, notwithstanding the difference that had arisen. And it should dispose us the more to receive the teaching of St. Paul in his Epistles, and the account of his Acts, as a further elucidation of the Faith of the Gospel, and of the Church system, as settled by "the Twelve," whom the Lord Jesus at first commissioned to found, and then to govern, His Church.

And we cannot conclude this allusion to the action of the Church in the Apostles' times, without seeing that it forms a fitting example and precedent for all Christians to follow in after ages when any difficulty or dissension arises: that is, that one branch or section of the Church should not by itself take the law into

its own hands, and lay down any new rule or article of faith, or any different view thereof, by itself, but that before concluding or finally determining any such important matter, it should *consult the Church* in other parts, who equally are members with them in the same body: taking a neighbouring branch of the Church first, or that with which they have most communion by nearness of place: but still more, and above all, consult the Church as it was in the beginning to ascertain the nature of its constitution; the Rule it followed; the Teaching it received. In the records and writings of the Primitive Christians there is much to guide us; much to shew us in these distracting days, when division and dissension abound so much, how Christians ought to walk, and what doctrine they must abide by, so that they may continue “steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.”

“Of this we are right sure,” says the learned Richard Hooker in the preface to his Ecclesiastical Polity, (Chap. vi), “that *nature, Scripture and experience itself*, have all taught the world to seek for the ending of contention by submitting itself unto some judicial and definite sentence, whereunto neither part that contendeth may, under any pretence or colour, refuse to stand.” And he proceeds to shew what the ordinance of God under the old Dispensation was: “if there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood, between plea, &c.” And then refers to this Council of the Church in Jerusalem, as the ordinance of God, under the New Dispen-

sation for Christians. After which he proceeds to argue very forcibly after this manner: "If God be not the author of confusion but of peace, then can He not be the author of our refusal, but of our contentment, to stand unto some definite sentence; without which almost impossible it is that either we should avoid confusion, or ever hope to obtain peace. To small purpose had the Council of Jerusalem been assembled, if once their determination being set down, men might afterwards have defeated their former opinions. When, therefore, they had given their definite sentence, all controversy was at an end. Things were disputed before they came to be determined; men afterwards were not to dispute any longer, but to obey. The sentence of judgment finished their strife, which their disputes before judgment could not do. This was ground sufficient for any reasonable man's conscience to build upon, whatsoever his own opinions were as touching the matter before in question. So full of wilfulness and self-liking is our nature, that without some definite sentence, which being given may stand, and a necessity of silence on both sides afterwards imposed, small hope there is that strifes thus far prosecuted will in a short time quietly end."

But now we come to a critical part of our subject; and it must be asked, Are there any intimations or proofs in the writings of St. Paul that before his death he had appointed any individuals to succeed him in taking the oversight and rule over the Churches

of which he had hitherto had the care and control? Did he, when he felt that he could not for long watch over them, as much as was needed, give a like authority, as he possessed, to others to act as the governors of the Church in certain places in his stead, with Elders and Deacons under him? The first Apostles, as we have seen, before leaving Jerusalem entirely, to go forth into distant lands to make disciples for Christ, had invested one beforehand with the same Episcopal authority which they had exercised, and as one made responsible for the good order and government of the Church in that city and neighbourhood; and did St. Paul likewise, before entirely giving up the control of any of the Churches which he had, act in a similar manner and follow the model set him in the final settlement of the Church at Jerusalem by the first Apostles, and make a like provision? This is the most important point to determine, because it will go far to prove that St. Paul felt the necessity of transferring his Episcopal authority to others, and regarded the appointment of Diocesan Bishops as a permanent institution in the Church, settled by the original Apostles, and to be everywhere established as soon as the need for them arose. He considered himself, as we have shown, as *a ruler in one and the same body* with the earlier Apostles, and it was only reasonable to suppose that he should follow the precedent that had been set by them in founding the Church at Jerusalem: his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the Churches he had planted

would incline him to make a like arrangement for them also; and, the more so, since it was a provision that would commend itself to reasonable practical men—that some one kind of rule or management should be followed in all Churches alike.

If the Episcopal rule that the Apostles exercised, were intended to “expire with themselves,” (Presbyterianism Defended, p. 81), we should find no provision made for handing it over to others and perpetuating it. But if we find the same powers which the Apostles, as Bishops, exercised, were committed by them to men who were to take their places, are we not warranted in concluding that they designed that the office of the Episcopacy was not to cease with themselves, but to be continued in the Church? It differed, indeed, somewhat from theirs, inasmuch as the Apostles were the original possessors of the authority, those whom they appointed received it by transmission from them; and, as has been hinted at, the Apostles were Bishops at large, not confined to one Church, while those who succeeded them were limited and restricted to a particular territory. But even among the Apostles we can trace a division of labour, inasmuch as the Apostles at Jerusalem, would have Paul and Barnabas, when they gave them the right hand of fellowship, to “go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” (Gal. ii. 9.) And which division was further carried out by the original Apostles, when they went forth to preach the Gospel to every creature,” since they severally took various parts of the world for their

labours, so that they might not interfere in the territory where another Apostle was working. Hence Diocesan Episcopacy was but the carrying out in a definite manner the principle which they themselves observed. And in thus giving to each of those whom they appointed as rulers of the Church a certain definite sphere for the exercise of their authority, they were not only providing a proper and orderly distribution of power, but a rule and safeguard against the officious, and uncalled for interference of other Bishops, who instead of minding their own flocks, should think that they must intrude into the provinces of others, and rule them also.

But now let us proceed to inquire what further light Holy Scripture throws upon this subject — the establishment of Diocesan Episcopacy. And the reader is at once referred to the Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and to Titus,—two of those whom he has employed to help him in his extended Episcopacy,—as a substantiation of the fact. We turn first to the Epistles to Timothy ; and upon examination, it is immediately apparent that the Apostle addresses him as one having the authority of a Diocesan Bishop at Ephesus. We have no account of Timothy being consecrated or solemnly set apart to this office, any more than we have that of James, Bishop of Jerusalem ; but the very object of St. Paul's writing to Timothy, was to give him special directions about the manner of his governing and controlling the Church of Ephesus. Bear in mind that we already know, from St. Paul

sending for the Elders of this Church to meet him at Miletus, that there must have been a plurality of ministers at Ephesus ; and that whatever equality there might be among themselves, they did render subjection to, and acknowledged the rule of one individual. Hence from the beginning, from the very time of their being ordained, these ministers were under Episcopal rule, and did not rule themselves, and elect a president merely to guide their discussions or assemblies. If we are to trust the dates in our marginal reference Bibles, St. Paul's visitation charge was delivered in the year 60. And the letters to Timothy were written in the years 65 and 66. Between these periods St. Paul had been imprisoned at Rome for a couple of years, and Timothy had been intrusted with the Episcopacy of Ephesus. And there might have been nothing remarkable in these letters being addressed by St. Paul to Timothy, as a single individual, if they contained matter of a purely personal character. As such they might be regarded as letters which one Christian might write to another. But this is not their character. They are addressed to Timothy *as an official personage* ; and contain advice relative to the discharge of public duties to the Church ; and these duties, and the position which Timothy holds, are clearly and decidedly Episcopal.

As proof of this, we select a few passages out of several advices and injunctions which are scattered over the Epistles, and give an idea of their character ; which will distinctly shew that in the judgment of St.

Paul, and by the consent of the Ephesian Church, Timothy occupied a station superior to, and distinct from, that of the rest of its ministers; take the following:—

“I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia,—that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.” (1 Tim. i, 3, 4.) And afterwards the Apostle alludes to some who, “having swerved” from the Faith, “have turned aside to vain jangling: desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” Here then, we say, the necessity of there being some one in the Ephesian Church with authority to restrain and condemn these false teachers is apparent, and in the above passage there is a plain assertion of the right of Timothy to sit in judgment upon the doctrine inculcated by the teachers and preachers in all Christian assemblies, and issue his injunctions respecting the character of their preaching.

Then in the third chapter, we find some necessary directions set forth regarding *the choice of fit persons* to be appointed to the two other orders of ministers, Bishops and Deacons. “A Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach,” &c., &c. (verses 2-7.) “Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first

be proved: then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless . . . Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." (verses 8-13.) And then in the next verse he tells Timothy that they should be advanced, if they have discharged this lower office well; saying, "For they that have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith." These instructions are evidently given by St. Paul to counsel Timothy in the duties of his Episcopal office, as if to him alone belonged the power of selecting, and ordaining persons to both offices.

Again the Apostle writes, "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." And, "Against an Elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." "I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that *thou* observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." (1 Tim. v. 17, 19-22.) St. Paul, therefore, evidently regards Timothy *as the ruler and judge in the Church at Ephesus*; as occupying a tribunal before which all charges against ministers are to be preferred. The Elders—at that time also called Bishops—were ministers or Pastors of the Church, labouring in the word and doctrine; and bare also a

certain degree of rule over the people committed to their charge, over whom they had been "made overseers," or Bishops in a lower degree; but they also themselves were under a higher rule, and were subject to the Chief Bishop who was appointed over them, and the whole Church in that part. Those Elders who were faithful and zealous in their rule and duties, Timothy was to count as worthy of double honour; and *he* is not to receive a complaint against any of them, without its being substantiated by two or three witnesses; and thus respect their office; but of them that sin either in respect of doctrine, or in conduct and conversation, so that it became flagrant, it was *his duty* to "rebuke before all." And this exercise of authority which he had, would not have been acknowledged and submitted to by the Elders, had it not been that he had been duly appointed over them by the Apostle; and that they recognized his authority to act thus. Moreover, St. Paul intimates that he would be to blame if he did not thus exercise this authority; for if he did not, he himself might be charged with complicity, either from fear or partiality. "Be thyself without reproach," the Apostle seems to say, "do not wink at what is wrong in any one of them; and because of sin, be the more careful not hastily to lay hands on any man for the sacred office of a minister, without considering well his character and trustworthiness." And with a most solemn adjuration bids him thus faithfully discharge what may be regarded as the anxious and painful duties of his Episcopal office. (1 Tim. iv. & v.)

Again, in the next chapter "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness:" (1 Tim. vi. 3.) the Apostle bids Timothy not to acknowledge them, rather "from such withdraw thyself." (v. 5.)

In the second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul writes, "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, commit *thou* to *faithful men* who shall be able to teach others also." (ii. 2). Here is another plain intimation that the power of selecting and ordaining ministers in the Church is in his hands. And when shortly afterwards he speaks about the faithfulness of the servants of the Lord, in preaching the Gospel, the Apostle adds, "Of these things put them (*i.e.*, those who have been ordained) in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit but to the subverting of the hearer." (v. 14). Timothy is here urged as their Bishop, for it is one of the duties of his office, to remind them of the Gospel message they are commissioned to deliver; and to charge or warn them to avoid trifling with it, by resorting to unprofitable discourse, which will bring their hearers no nearer to Jesus, but rather divert their minds from Him. And in the two following verses, the Apostle draws the portraiture of a faithful minister, in which Timothy is to be an example to all of them, "Study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane

and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness." (Verses 15, 16).

Further on in this Epistle he foretells Timothy of a fierce contention, and of impending estrangements and heresies; "For the time will come, when they (certain members of the Church) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they *heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." That would happen of which St. Paul had forewarned the very Elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to Miletus, that "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them." But in rousing words the Apostle bids Timothy, the ruling Shepherd in charge of the whole flock of Christ in that part, to "brace himself up to meet the fearful assault, which is designed to divide and scatter the sheep." Listen to his words, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing in His Kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, *reprove, rebuke, exhort* with all long suffering and doctrine. . . . Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Tim., iv. 5.)

Now the argument arising from these passages is clearly this, that St. Paul could not have written as he did to Timothy, unless the Church of Ephesus had been under his government; unless he had been appointed to rule over the whole Church in that part: whereby the

other ministers and their people or congregations, were in subjection to him, and did acknowledge him as their chief; and whom St. Paul, who had ordained most of them, upheld in this office, and wrote to, *as the one to whom he had given this authority*. Hence we have here a direct proof of Diocesan Episcopacy, as the one rule for the future government of the Church of Christ; or if not, the Church, or the Elders would have been left to decide matters for themselves, which, from the Apostle's words, they were not allowed to do.

The whole Constitution of the Church of Ephesus, (says an able writer) will accord with the theory of a subordination among ministers, but it is at utter variance with that of an equality. If we doubt it, let us ask Dissenters, would they—do they, allow to any one minister the position and the duties fulfilled by Timothy? Will they allow to any *one minister* of their body an ordaining power? Will they permit him to assume the office of a rebuker? Will they permit him officially to receive accusations against his brethren? Will they place in his hands the right to control, to regulate, to reform matters of discipline in the Church? No, for this would be the exaltation of that one to a throne of authority and peculiar privilege; and destructive of that system of parity on which they so much (perhaps so causelessly) congratulate themselves.

The inference, then, to which a review of these Epistles conducts us, is, that in Apostolic times, and by Apostolic arrangement, the system of ministerial inequality was that inculcated in the Churches; and that

the Church of Ephesus, a community planted and protected by the hands of Paul himself, possessed a three-fold ministry, the Deacons looking forward to a higher office; the Presbyters labouring in the word and doctrine; and the Bishop in the person of Timothy, superintending all, and exercising control in matters of discipline and faith. This is St. Paul's rule or system of Church government which he himself adopted, and implanted in the Church of Ephesus; and it is the rule or model of the Church at Jerusalem, as finally settled by the first Apostles, and that too after the pattern showed them in Christ's ministry.

But the case of Timothy in his relation to the Church of Ephesus, as evidence of the rule or system instituted by St. Paul in the Churches under his care, *does not stand alone*. In the Epistle of St. Paul to *Titus* with reference to the Church in Crete, there is ample corroborative evidence of the rule or system of Church government, adopted and ordained by the Apostles in the early ages of the Church: so that no one need be left in doubt or uncertainty about the matter: for herein the Apostle confirms the evidence given in his other Epistles to Timothy, and bears witness to the fact that a subordination of ministers was instituted, and that the Diocesan Episcopacy was settled there, in that Titus was *the one individual appointed to rule the Church in Crete, as Timothy had been at Ephesus*.

Take but a few passages in support of this statement:—"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and

ordain Elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Tit. i. 5.) Now Christianity had been early introduced into Crete. Probably thirty years before the coming of St. Paul and Titus it had taken root in the island: for among those who had listened to the first preaching of the Gospel by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost were certain Cretes, who would carry back to their countrymen the wonderful tidings fresh from the mouths of those who were witnesses that Christ, on whom they should believe, had risen from the dead; and St. Paul and Titus had apparently found Christianity spread over the country in a certain fashion, but as yet in an unorganized condition. St. Paul evidently had been unable to stay long in the island, so as to constitute the Church among them in a proper and efficient manner, so as to unite the Christians throughout the whole island together in one body, as most agreeable to the will of Christ; and bring them all under proper spiritual training; whereby they should all "be of one mind," both as to doctrine, and Church ways and ordinances.

For his "ways which be in Christ," St. Paul tells us; "I teach everywhere *in every Church*." (1 Cor. iv. 17.) One rule or system, therefore, prevailed in all the Churches he planted, so that there might be a uniformity of action in keeping up the unity of the whole body. This is plainly impressed upon us, and St. Paul would have all Christians to understand it; for again he intimates the same fact when speaking of certain matters, as to how every man ought so to walk, he adds "*And so ordain I in all Churches*." (1 Cor. vii. 17.)

Now to suffer the Christians in Crete to live at random, without being subject to any rule, was not to be thought of. This state of things must be rectified without delay: and therefore returning to the consideration of the quotation, St. Paul reminds Titus, that he left him in Crete for this very end, that he should "set in order the things that are wanting." And Titus from past experience, and having been previously employed as a messenger to other Churches, knew well what was the order, or definite rule of the Church, both as regards doctrine and ways, which St. Paul enjoined him to attend to and effect. It was to be *one and the same in Crete*, as in other Churches. This passage, then, as indeed the whole Epistle, and those to Timothy, clearly prove the importance and necessity of Church Government, and that Titus is left to introduce such Church order in Crete as prevailed in other Christian Churches.

And then how important the evidence contained in the next clause, "*and to ordain Elders in every City.*" This is a leading element of Church Order, and shews the necessity—as it would appear in the Apostle's eyes—that the Christians should have among them *a settled ordained ministry*, receiving their authority from one who had been appointed by an acknowledged Apostle of the Lord. Titus might be guided in the choice of persons to be made Elders, by the recommendation of the several Christian communities that he visited in this "hundred-citied isle," and the testimony they gave of any person suitable for the office, as the Apostles at Jerusa-

lem had done in the ordination of the Seven Deacons, and as St. Paul probably did in most of his ordinations, and yet the final selection and ordination of the several Elders *was here entirely in the hands of Titus*. He alone had authority to ordain, though he might probably have some of the existing Elders to lay their hands along with his own, on the newly ordained, as was the custom, and the which has descended to our own time. But none of the Elders, either individually or collectively by themselves, nor any other kind of minister in the Church of Christ, ever had authority given them to ordain any one, however pious and zealous that one might be. For it was the Order of the Church as established by the Apostles, as a standing ordinance for ever among Christians, that no one could be ordained to the ministry, except through a ruler or Bishop of the Church, who had rightly received the Episcopacy, which they, the Apostles, exercised and transmitted to others.

There is only one passage which seems to give any colour to the belief that a company of Presbyters might confer orders, and ordain other ministers, and that is, the words in the first Epistle of Timothy, where St. Paul says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, *with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*." (iv. 14.) But let this passage be taken in connection with another written by St. Paul to Timothy also, and we shall be better able to get to the real meaning of the above words, as regards the authority of Elders or Presbyters

to ordain by themselves, for the Apostle says to Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, *by the putting on of my hands.*" (2 Tim. i. 7.) From this it would appear that St. Paul was the principal person in the ordination of Timothy; and that the Presbytery, if by this term a company of Elders or simple Presbyters are meant, joined in the act of ordaining by laying their hands on him also, as approving and acknowledging him as rightly ordained. And this opinion seems confirmed by looking a little more attentively at both passages. In the former the preposition used is *μετὰ* "*with the laying on of the hands,*" in the latter the word is *διὰ* "*through*" or "*by my hands.*" If we read the Word of God aright in this passage, then, it gives no support to the notion that a company of Presbyters can ordain any one by themselves; they may lay their hands on the person to be ordained, *with* the chief pastor or ruler; but it is only *through* or *by* the chief pastor, that the authority and grace of ordination is transmitted. Indeed, Dr. Macknight, the Presbyterian commentator, says on this point, "since it appears from 2 Tim. i. 6. that the Apostle, by the imposition of *his hands alone*, conferred on Timothy the spiritual gift here mentioned, we must suppose that the Eldership at Lystra laid their hands on him, *only to show their concurrence with the Apostle.*" (1 Tim. iv. 14.) So, that if taken in the ordinary interpretation of the passage, the great and sole instance adduced from Scripture in support of Presbyterian ordination falls to the ground.

Knowing that there is no record in the early history of Christianity of any ordination of Presbyters, *by Presbyters alone*, that was accounted valid, many of the ancient writers as St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, Eusebius, and Socrates, and some modern ones, as Grotius, Calvin, and a few leading Presbyterian writers, interpret this passage to Timothy after this manner : “with the laying on of the hands, (whereby you have authority for the ordination) of the Presbytery.” And there seems some ground for this reading of the passage if we have regard to the context, because the Apostle is speaking of the *gift* that is in Timothy, “which was given by prophecy,” and what was that gift but the power bestowed of laying hands upon Presbyters ; for, shall St. Paul speak of the gift and not mention what it is ?

Moreover, there is some doubt entertained, whether by the word “Presbytery,” Presbyters simply are meant. The learned commentator Bengel says, “The Presbytery consisted of Paul himself (Cor. ii., 2 St. John i., 1 Peter v. 1.) and Silas, and others also ;” and in two passages, we find both St. John and St. Peter calling themselves Presbyters. Just as a Bishop in the present day, does not cease to be a Presbyter though made a Bishop, but is still a Presbyter, and exercises the office and duties of a Presbyter, though he is at the same time something more, of a higher rank or Order, and has authority to do what Presbyters simply have no right to do ; viz., to ordain, and exercise rule over other ministers, and set in order the things that are wanting.

And so out of modesty, or a desire to conciliate the Presbyters over whom they have authority, and to assure them that they also were engaged with them in one and the same blessed work, and for the same blessed Master as they were, even two of the very chiefest Apostles condescended to call themselves Presbyters: hence the term "Presbytery" may apply to those who were really something more than simply Presbyters. Indeed, in one of the oldest versions of the New Testament, the Ethiopic, the translation of the passage is, the hands of *the Bishops*. The Bishops of the Church are, and may be termed Presbyters as well; but Presbyters simply can never be called Bishops in the present sense of the term, because they have not the authority or jurisdiction of Bishops in the Church of Christ. And further, this view of the term "Presbytery" being composed of those who were in the rank above the Presbyters or Elders simply, respecting the occasion when Timothy was made a Bishop and not a Presbyter merely—is strengthened by the fact, that it seems to have become a rule in the Primitive Church, that one Bishop or Ruler should not consecrate another person to be Bishop by himself, but must have one or two, if not more, to co-operate with him in the act; and that the Order of Bishop was thus transmitted by the Apostles themselves, and not by one only, but by two or more. Thus James is said not to have been appointed Bishop of Jerusalem by any one alone, but *by the Apostles*. So even in the case of Rome, though St. Peter is frequently

mentioned as the Apostle from whom the Bishops there had their beginning, probably as being the consecrator, and one of the first Apostles, yet St. Paul is named as being joined with him in the act. For Eusebius, speaking of the death of Evarastus, as Bishop of Rome, says, "he was succeeded in the Episcopal office by Alexander, the fifth in succession from Peter and Paul." (Eccl. Hist., Book iv. chap. 1.)

On this account, in the *Canons of the Apostles*, it is ordered first of all, "Let a Bishop be consecrated by two or three Bishops." And this was afterwards confirmed by the first General Council of the Church at Nicæa. (A.D. 325.) The object then of St. Paul's saying that the gift of ordination was given to Timothy *with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, might be to assure him, that he received the Episcopate, by the agreement of others, as representatives of the Apostles, acting *with* St. Paul in his consecration. This seems the most likely interpretation of the term "Presbytery" here, when taken in connection with the custom that was everywhere adopted from Apostolic times.

But to return. Another thing to observe in the passage about Titus, is, that the Apostle is careful to note that Titus *had not appointed himself*; he had not taken this high office of the Episcopate upon himself, any more than Timothy, but had been regularly called and "sent;" not by the members merely of the Church, nor by the vote of the Elders, but by Apostolic commission. He was to exercise the office of the Episcopate in Crete, St. Paul says, "as *I had*

appointed thee." He was not only to discharge the duties of his office, in the manner prescribed by the Apostle, according to his "ways" as known in other Churches, but in the doing of them he was to act as *the one to whom the Apostle had given authority.*

And as in the case of Timothy, so had he given to Titus the qualifications of those whom he was to ordain as Elders. There is no necessity, however, to repeat the qualifications, as they are in most points similar to those given to Timothy for his guidance; but but there are one or two matters that should be noticed. If there are any persons "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake;" Titus is to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith." (i. 11, 13.) Again, the Apostle gives him instructions as to the conduct of all classes of Christians, whatever their condition or position, and how they are to take Christ as their example; and then addressing himself to Titus, he says, "These things speak, and *exhort* and *rebuke with all authority: Let no man despise thee.*" (ii. 15.) And again, "A man that is an heretic, (or "factions" in the margin of R.V.) after the first and second admonition *reject*; knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (iii. 10, 11.) Now taking these passages along with the first which has been referred to, from the Epistle to Titus, few will fail to perceive, we think, that St. Paul addresses Titus as a superior officer of the Church, superintending the affairs of the Church, not for ordaining only, but having other ministers under his control, keeping a

watchful eye over the conduct of the Christians generally, and, where necessary, to *rebuke with authority, to rebuke sharply*, and even *to reject*, or cast out of the Church. It is difficult to conceive any one thoughtfully reading over these passages, and not seeing that Titus was invested with considerable power; not seeing, that in his selecting properly qualified persons as ministers, and assigning them particular places in the several cities of Crete, his duties were different from theirs, his rank and station higher than theirs. In short, it would be difficult not to acknowledge, in the authority which Titus had, according to St. Paul's words, that he was in reality clothed with Diocesan Episcopacy.

If it had been otherwise, then we should have found St. Paul writing either to *a number of Elders*, if there were any such ministers at that time in Crete—there were certainly some in Ephesus,—or to the *members of the Church*, or the Christians generally, respecting the qualifications of those who are to be ordained as Elders and Deacons among them, and bidding *them* to select and appoint whom *they* liked, and *as* they liked; but he does no such thing. He does not send these special instructions to any body of Christians or ministers, but to *one individual*. In the case of Ephesus to Timothy, in the case of Crete to Titus, who severally bear rule over their respective Dioceses. And it seems very probable that other individuals were appointed elsewhere by St. Paul, as Bishops to rule the Church of God, in definite spheres assigned to them; for there are indications of it,

and many statements in very early Ecclesiastical history, that support this view: for St. Paul had other men whom he had trained for the office of rulers, and had been his coadjutors. For besides Timothy and Titus, we may name, Epiphraas, Silas, Luke the Physician, Aristarchus, Mark, Erastus, and Tychicus. These men were certainly prepared for the Episcopate, and knew well St. Paul's "ways" of carrying on the Church system, and the doctrines that he taught.

If, then, the authority of the Apostles was to terminate with their lives, why the appointment of such men as Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus in the island of Crete—why did the Apostles appoint other men to help them and to succeed them in ruling and governing the Church after their death? The fact that St. Paul, and the other Apostles *did* appoint chosen men, in whom they placed trust and power, to govern the Church, is of itself, a clear and sufficient proof, that the authority which they exercised as Bishops, having the chief rule in the Church, was to be continued and carried on after their departure. And as there is no sufficient proof that they at all sanctioned or recognized any other kind of government, it is an evident token to all Christian men, that Episcopal government, and none other, was established as a divine ordinance for ever in the Church of Christ.

In conclusion, the Apostleship of St. Paul sufficiently demonstrates that there was no place, no authority for the Papal system, inasmuch as it is perfectly clear that neither he, nor any of the other Apostles were

subject to St. Peter; that the latter was liable to err; and that He was never recognised by them as having supreme rule over the Church of Christ; and if he had not, then certainly the Popes of Rome have no right or authority to claim supremacy over the whole Church; no ground to be accounted infallible in their judgment, or when they speak *ex Cathedra*.

And in like manner the Apostleship of St. Paul sufficiently demonstrates that there was no place, no authority for Presbyterian government, nor for Congregational Independency, in the Church of Christ: much less that Christians had the right of free organisation among themselves. No adequate proofs can be advanced out of Holy Scripture, that the Apostles left the Christian Church to take care of itself; or suffered Christians generally to form any other organization than the Church, *as the one body* of Christ. Nor can any real evidence be adduced to shew that the government of the Church was left in charge to the members of it generally; nor in the hands of the Presbyters only, or that they were left free to do as they liked, and without being under the direction or control of one individual as the ruler of the Church in any part, in the place of the Apostles. There clearly was an efficient government in the Church: and only one kind of Church government, and that was without doubt *Episcopal government*. To disprove it you will have first to tare out from the sacred volume the Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus; and even then there will be other evidence in the Word of

God to prove that the Church of Christ was—both its ministers and people—placed under the rule of Bishops. More than thirty years pass after the death of St. Paul, and this matter is still confirmed by singular evidence in Holy Scripture, as if the Lord from heaven had put his seal upon it, and stamped it with His sanction, as His rule in His Church.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FINAL TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE RESPECTING THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

CHRIST has said "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established," and as if for the very purpose of establishing His believing people in the system of Church government which he designed, and instructed "the Twelve" to institute and bring into existence, the Scriptures of the New Testament give two or three series of testimonies, not only as to its existence, but also as to what it is; that there might be no mistake or mis-understanding about it; and that by having this one system well-known, fully settled, and thoroughly authenticated and received, the basis of true Christian unity might be well established and loyally upheld.

In Christ's own words and institutions we have the germ or seed of what the Church was to be. And like the seed when sown in the earth it would be developed after its kind; it would have its own definite character.

In the brief and fragmentary accounts of what the Twelve Apostles did at Jerusalem, we have certain indications and glimpses of how they gradually constituted the Church, and how, after many years, they completed their work, in carrying out the design of Christ after the pattern and instructions He gave them.

Then we have the corroborative testimony of St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, given in a diversity of ways, in confirmation of the Divine plan, in what they had done ; not attempting to begin any other system, or body of Christians, but taking up that which the Apostles before him had established, or laid the foundation of, so that there might be no division anywhere among the followers of Jesus, whatever their nationality or condition. And this he did because he perceived through the revelation of Christ to him, that it was the will of the Lord that there should be but one body and one system of government among His people everywhere : hence he spent his life in adding to the Church, as the body of the Lord, such as were seeking salvation ; and laboured to prevent any division in it, or separation from it.

And then, thirdly, we come to consider another remarkable Scripture testimony to the character or nature of the Church system, as founded by the command of Christ : to which the Lord Himself bears witness in a real, though supernatural, manner, through His last remaining Apostle, after all the others had long ago gone to their rest ; and more than a quarter of a century after St. Paul wrote his Epistles to Timothy and Titus : as if to seal and establish the rule of Church government till the end should come ; and that there might be no change in it hereafter.

For on turning to the last book in the Bible, “the Revelation of Jesus Christ,” written, as is supposed

about thirty years after St. Paul wrote his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, by St. John, one of the youngest of the Twelve Apostles first appointed by Christ, and who lived long after the others were dead—we find ample evidence that the basis or government of the Church in different places was identically the same in all essential points. This is towards the close of the first century; the date of the Revelation, in the marginal reference Bibles, being A.D. 96. Now what was the state of things at this time? Consider the picture of the Church as St. John depicts it. In the earlier Chapters of this Book he lays before us Seven Letters that he had been instructed by our Lord Jesus Christ “to write and send to the Seven Churches which were in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.” (Rev. i. 4-11.) St. John was the amanuensis; Christ dictated what he was to write.

If there was one thing more than another that was wanted to complete the evidence of Holy Scripture respecting the character or government of the Church, and the basis on which Christian unity was to be maintained, it was in receiving some such final acknowledgment of it from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; that Christians might know by some sure means, and thereby be certified, that what the Apostles—the master-builders for founding and raising His Church—did, had upon the whole been done well according to the instructions Christ had given them; and that the

settlement or Constitution for the future government of His Church, and the preservation of unity among His people, was agreeable to His will and design. If it could be, then, such supplementary evidence as this would satisfy those then living, and those ever afterwards, who honestly desired to be Christians, and to live as Christ would have them, in one body—that the foundations of His Church had been laid as He would have them to be—that the order and arrangements they had instituted for its future existence and well-being were what He sanctioned and approved of. There would then, at least, be little room for them,—the sincere followers of Christ—to doubt about the Society they were to be united to; there would then be less danger for those who plainly adhered to the written Word of God, to be drawn aside by the cunning devices and inventions of men, to separate themselves and thereby cause division and dissension among Christians.

And marvellous to contemplate, and far beyond what we could naturally have looked for! this very thing came to pass; this supplementary evidence which might be considered to put the question beyond all doubt, was really vouchsafed unto Christians. The Lord Jesus Christ, about sixty or more years after His Ascension into Heaven, sent certain messages from the other world—when seated in the majesty of His power and glory, at the right hand of God—in which He clearly recognizes, accepts, and certifies, as it were, the settlement and Constitution of the Church by the

Apostles, as it leaves their hands, to be fashioned according to His mind and plan. If it had not been so, if Christ had not been satisfied as to the form and foundation of the Church as it then existed, we might have expected, that before the last of His Twelve Apostles died—the then aged St. John, the writer of one of the Gospels—He would have ordered some emendation, correction, or addition, to the arrangement, or order that existed, and was acted upon. But in His not having done so, and having found no fault or blame with what they had done, or with the work they had carried out, as far as they were concerned—though he did blame and severely censure some who were then in office—it is clear that the Church was such as He would have it to be—the very bond of unity and of all peace if faithfully adhered to—and as, in all essential points, it was for ever to remain: so that no material alteration was to be made, no other system was to be allowed, or received by Christians. The Lord had done all that He could well do (and what could have been done more effectually?) to assure His people of His will, and how they were to live as one people, in one body,—and more than we could expect! It is for His people now to shew their faithfulness, their love and loyalty to Him, by their adhering, as strictly as they can, to His revealed Will, as made known to them in His Holy Word.

There is something so remarkable and peculiar in these messages which the Lord Jesus sent; so very different from other parts of the Written Word, that

some little more attention should be given to them, and the time when they were sent. Time enough had been given since St. Paul's departure, to have made any change in the order of ministers or the system of Church government, if any such had taken place. Time enough also had been given to develop and consolidate the system or rule ordained by the Apostles which had been long and carefully thought over and carried out under divine guidance. And this system had been pursued, as we learn from these divine letters; for they disclose to us, that there had been no radical change in the Constitution of the Church, since the Apostles separated after laying the foundation or model of it in Jerusalem; but that the scheme or plan they had settled upon and laid down, as the Lord Jesus had directed them, had only been the more completely consolidated and extended. The Church, like the Mustard seed sown in the earth, had grown up, and was beginning to send out its branches in all directions; but still retaining its own peculiar and distinctive character, as every tree, or seed sown does; it had not changed from what it was, but had sprung up and developed itself as Christ had designed. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

Now, to whom were these seven letters written? To the members of the Church in the several places named, or to the Elders or Teachers who ministered unto them? No. To neither one or the other; but to the *Angels of the Churches*. And

who were these Angels? Clearly, since some of them were reproved, they are not to be understood as the messengers of God from heaven, who are specially called Angels; neither could St. John have had instructions to write to such. But, from an examination of these Seven Epistles, they appear to have undoubtedly been the Diocesan Bishops of these several Churches; and that the term Angel was one of the names by which those exercising the *Episcopal office* were called, until a fixed one was settled upon. They had evidently been severally appointed to rule over the Churches; and were as such recognized by St. John, and indeed by Jesus Christ Himself—the one great Bishop and Shepherd of the sheep, for whom they were to act as Chief Shepherds, sent and authorized by Him. And since the Lord Jesus commanded these letters to be written to these Angels of the Churches, entering into the particular circumstance or condition of each, this is another proof that He was still personally watching over, guiding, and superintending the several parts of His Church on Earth: and that He still continued as the living, acting Head of the Church, just as if He were bodily present with it, able from on high through His own Divine attributes to govern and oversee the whole Church, in a much higher and effectual way than He could as man on earth, who as such could only be visible in one place at one time.

And not only this, but the fact of His ordering St. John to send these letters, is equivalent to His

acknowledging and giving His sanction to Diocesan Episcopacy; nay, more, that he approved it, as having originated from Himself; and that in the Apostles having established it, they had carried out His instructions, and that it was esteemed by Him as the best kind of government that could be devised, for the preservation of unity in the whole body of Christians, and for carrying out His will and design, whereby His followers might continue to be one; and, that He hereby, in causing these letters to be written, put His seal upon Diocesan Episcopacy, as a permanent institution for the government of His Church; and consequently, Christians in every age are bound to adhere to this regimen or orderly rule authorised in the Church, if they would pay attention to Christ's wish. It is particularly necessary that it should be so, that one clear and distinct form of government should be indicated in Holy Scripture as sanctioned by our Lord, *in order* that Christians might be kept together in one body: for without these intimations, these precedents, and repeated confirmations of it—while none other is named or sanctioned—in Holy Scripture to guide us, Christians in those early days, as well as those in modern times, would not have known so surely what to do; there would have been no definite rule to go by, whereby they should be maintained in one body, and be as one people unto the Lord everywhere, and then it would have been no fault of theirs; they could not be blamed if every one did what was right in his own eyes, and dissension and divisions abounded, as they

do at the present time. But as it is otherwise, as there are clear enough indications in Holy Scripture as to how we are to continue one, every Christian who does not conform to this, or, at least wilfully departs from it, and especially those who teach and persuade men to do so, will have to give an account thereof to God, for the disorder and disunity that exists.

Before we pass on to make a short examination of the Epistles themselves to corroborate what has been said, *the situation* of these Churches should be noticed. They are situated on the Western side of Asia Minor, and cover the country, in one portion of it, just as much or more so, (for some of them are closer together) than the Dioceses in the Southern Counties of England. Take the Dioceses of Canterbury, London, Rochester, Chichester, Winchester, Salisbury, and Exeter; and you will find that they stand in a similar position to the Seven Churches of Asia, to which St. John wrote by the command of Jesus Christ. Mark, how what is now termed Diocesan Episcopacy had been extended and settled.

There were many other important Churches, as Rome, and Corinth, and Antioch, which are not named. But here in a small territory, of not more than a hundred miles in extent, there are seven several places (or once populous cities) marked out, and defined as the seats of those who respectively governed the Churches within it.

The only difference between those in England and those in Asia Minor, at the time St. John wrote, is,

that Bishops were more numerous than we now have them. Bishop Wordsworth, in his commentary about these Churches, to which St. John wrote, says : "This Scripture also supplies a sacred precedent, and Divine direction, as to *the size of Dioceses, and number of Bishops.* The territory, in which these Seven Churches were situated, was not much larger in extent, than that of some single modern Dioceses : and each great city had its Bishop." And if this is but a sample of what took place in other countries, as the subsequent history of the Church shows to be the case, we have a striking piece of evidence in the very Scriptures themselves, that the rule of the Church by Bishops fixed here and there, as ordained by the Apostles of Christ, had been greatly developed, and had become a *permanent* institution in the Church of Christ.

And now, consider the further evidence that exists as to these Angels to whom these letters were addressed being the seven Bishops of the Church in this part of Asia, with power and jurisdiction similar to what the Bishops of these days possess. It is to be noticed that these Angels of the Churches are individuals severally held responsible for what happens, either regarding the doctrine taught, or the order that is kept, agreeably to the rule given to them, in their respective spheres. If anything is wrong, they are blamed ; if the truth is maintained, irregularities and wickedness restrained, censured, and put down, their rule is approved ; and a blessed hope of reward is held out to those among them that are faithful.

Observe, they are not alone in their ministry, for others are associated with them ; but *they alone* are severally answerable *for the rule they bear* over them, and the Christians over whom they have the oversight.

Take the first of these letters that are named,—“unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus.” It was a populous city, and there must have been several Congregations of Christians : since it will be remembered that this Church was supplied with several ministers, for many Elders from this city gathered round St. Paul, at Miletus, to receive his parting counsels ; and they must have been pastors in the true sense of the word, for the Apostle bids them to *feed the flock of God that was among them, taking the oversight thereof*. And though they were each thus Bishops in a subordinate sense, yet Timothy had afterwards been appointed to bear rule over them in the Church there by St. Paul. But now many years had gone by since then, more than a quarter of a century ; and it is possible that he was not now alive, and some one else ruled in his stead, who was responsible for the state of the Church there. For notice how the letter sent to Ephesus, is not only addressed to *one person*,—“Unto *the Angel* of the Church at Ephesus,” but in the substance of the letter he is written to *in the singular number*, so that the words can have only reference to one individual,—to his conduct, what he has done, and must do.

Notice the frequent use of the pronoun in the first part of the letter in chap. ii. 2, “I know *thy*

works, and *thy* labour, and *thy* patience, and how *thou* canst not bear them that are evil; and *thou* hast tried them which say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." The internal evidence of the Epistle, then, clearly proves that it was written *to one person* in that Church, and not to several. It is only doing violence to the meaning of words to interpret it otherwise. It is but wresting the words of Holy Scripture from their proper sense, when a commentator among the Presbyterians tells people, that, "by the Angels, is not meant some more eminent than another in the Churches, such as the Lord Bishop; but by the Angels we understand all the Bishops and Presbyters that were over these Churches," and again, "It is not to be expounded of one man, as if some one man in each of these Churches had had the pre-eminence, because our Lord, writing to some of these Churches, and directing the Epistle to the Angel, speaketh of them as *more*, as when he writes to Smyrna, chapter ii, verse 10, he saith, 'fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried;' which relate primarily to the ministers in Smyrna: and supposeth more ministers than one; and that in directing the Epistle to the Angel of such a Church, he understood the whole collective body of ministers and Church officers. . . . Therefore take we the style 'Angel' to be collective." But is not this contrary to the common sense meaning of the passage, a non-natural and unwarrantable interpretation? For

you would not say that in writing to one person relative to several persons, as to what they do, or shall do, you wrote to all collectively, even though all were concerned in the matter written, and the more so when the person written to is spoken of as one in authority. Granted that there were a number of other ministers in the Church of Smyrna, as well as of Ephesus—which we contend for also—the writing to one alone would naturally lead you to suppose, that this person had in some lawful way the *pre-eminence among the others*, especially since he is addressed by a title of office given to him which is not used towards the others; and who is written to respecting the exercise of a certain power and jurisdiction which is intrusted to him, and to him alone. He is *the Angel* of the Church. The reasoning, therefore, would lead us to an opposite conclusion to what the commentator arrives at, and shews that the interpretation he gives to the term “Angel” is not only forced, but false; unreasonable and misleading. And such teaching is but an example of “the blind leading the blind,” so that “both of them fall into the ditch,” and is the origin of much division and dissension.

And the view that “the Angel” was one that had the lawful pre-eminence among other ministers, and had an authority which they did not possess, is further confirmed by the commendation which is implied, as to the manner in which *he* discharged the duties of his high office; and a certain degree of rebuke and warning that is given to *him* in respect

to such matters wherein he had failed—since the condition of the Church is largely chargeable to the manner in which he fulfilled the requirements of his sacred post, as a ruler in the Church. Thus, in the letter to the Ephesian ruler, our blessed Lord speaks approvingly of the work and labour and patience given by “the Angel” in what he had done, and how he had shewn that he could not “bear with them that are evil;” and then comes some mention of *the exercise of discipline*, which evidently belonged to his office, “*Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my Name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*” His patience and forbearance are prominently brought forward; and yet a time had come when it would have been criminal, and a clear dereliction of duty, to have any longer had patience and forbearance. He had laboured and had not fainted, with those who had brought disorder or false teaching into the Church, implying that by converse and argument, he had endeavoured to bring them to the obedience of the faith, and to the rule of the Church, but after all had failed. And thus at last he had been compelled to bring those who said they were Apostles to trial, and had found that they were not, but had “found them liars.”

It is evident, too, that the other ministers submitted to the jurisdiction of the Angel: for, if he had not been appointed by some lawful authority which they acknowledged as binding upon them, they would cer-

tainly have resisted such a ruler over the Church, and regarded his trial of ministers as an unwarrantable assumption and interference with their liberty, which they apparently did not. They had been accustomed to this superiority of rule for many years, and it was nothing new to them. Timothy, as you may remember, was, by the commission and authority of St. Paul, intrusted to govern this Church, and judge about the conduct and teaching of the other ministers; for, "against an Elder he was not to receive an accusation but before two or three witnesses." Those that he found guilty of sin, he was to "rebuke before all, that others also may fear." And St. Paul had bound him over in the most solemn manner to the execution of this most difficult and disagreeable duty, from which many a good man with a tender heart shrinks, and would fain not carry out into complete effect. The passage will bear repeating: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." (1 Tim. v. 21.) A similar ruler, one with equal authority, still exists at Ephesus, to whom respect and obedience is shewn, and who is to attend to the order and teaching of the Church, for which he is held responsible.

Beside which, the most important fact is, that this authority and rule which "the Angel" exercised, is *acknowledged and sanctioned by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself*. If "the Angel" had taken upon himself a power which he had no right to use, or taken up a

position and rank which did not belong to him, would he not have been reprov'd by the Lord? But the Lord regards his action—in the trial of those false teachers calling themselves Apostles—as if it were his proper office to try them, and to condemn them if he found they were not what they professed to be: so that this onerous duty was *his* to perform, however he might shrink from it; and did not belong to the other ministers in Ephesus. And it is further implied, that if he had failed in the right discharge of it, he would have been censured and severely reprov'd by our Lord.

Indeed, if these Epistles are examined, the Lord commends or blames these Angels *according to the manner* in which they severally govern their respective Churches, and *according to the condition* in which the Church in each place is found at the time. Though the Angel of the Church of Ephesus had done much, of which the Lord could approve, yet his superintendence of it, and the exercise of his influence as a ruler, had not lately been altogether perfect: for the Lord added, “Nevertheless, I have somewhat *against thee*, because *thou* hast left *thy* first love.” The first fervour of devotion in Christ’s service, as a sign of the ardent love that he once had, was lacking; signs of decline had been witnessed, the Lord could see this, and it was reflected in the Church under the Angel’s care, in the lack of zeal and piety, and the exercise of a lively glowing faith among the members. If the Angel had done his duty, in unceasingly stirring them up; putting

before them a high aim, even the example of Christ in all its power and beauty, this declension would not have taken place; and the Lord would not have had occasion to blame him.

But we are further informed that this state of things must not be allowed to continue; for if it does, a terrible judgment will fall both upon the Angel himself and upon the Church, for which he is supposed, and bound to care. "Remember, therefore, from whence *thou* art fallen;" consider how different it is with you now to what it was at the first; "and repent," lament your neglect in this respect; and see how sadly you have been to blame, and how grievous it is to God your Saviour, who would have you to love Him and labour for Him always with warm devotion; "and do thy first works." Resolve upon a change; and, calling to mind how it was with thee in the days that are past, let nothing suffer thee to come short of what thou then wert and didst in serving God. "Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." By the candlestick is meant the Church, see Chapter i, verse 20: and by the removal of it, that it will fail or cease to be a Church, though planted by an Apostle.

This shows us Christ's absolute Sovereignty over the Churches; and, that from want of faithfulness, any particular Church may fall and err, so that the clear light of Divine truth will not shine through it; and that this arises too often from carelessness and unfaithfulness in those who are appointed to rule. But still

we must remember that this will not effect the promise of Christ respecting His Church, that, as a whole, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" the truth will be upheld in other parts, and Christ's presence manifested according to that other promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And it might well be shewn, did space permit, how this was a judgment that would fall, not only upon the people of that place, but upon that person who had rule of the Church there also. The office of a Bishop, though so high and honourable a position and coveted by many, is one, nevertheless, of tremendous responsibility; so that some, having a deep sense of it, and a keen sense of their own shortcomings, have shrunk from accepting this sacred office; feeling that a lower sphere would be safer for them, and better for the people over whom they were to rule. "Who is sufficient for these things?" should be the cry especially of every Bishop, when he considers the duties of his holy calling; and should ever lead him more continually to seek the grace of God's Holy Spirit, that he may be faithful to his solemn trust.

And on the other hand, for their encouragement, let it be also remembered, that an abundant blessing is in every case promised to those who are faithful: to each it is said, "to him that overcometh:" and then, some special reward is held out to those who do: the difference between these promises showing the fulness of blessing, in the source from whence they come. The promises are indeed considered applicable

to all Christians *who overcome* the temptations which beset them in this present evil world; but, as you must perceive they are *primarily* applicable to those who have rule in the Churches. They have peculiar difficulties to overcome, as well as those common to all men; especially in seeing that the truth is upheld and taught by the other ministers within their jurisdiction; and that the rule and order of the Church, as well as purity, uprightness, and true piety, with the love of God, is maintained and advanced throughout the whole of their important charges. And all this can not be accomplished without much labour and patience; perseverance, and the exercise of tact and firmness. The Bishop will sometimes meet with opposition from those who ought gladly to obey his godly admonitions; some will want to be independent of control, and to go their own way, and teach what they like,—some favourite views, which are not according to sound doctrine. And the disorders and difficulties will in some cases so constantly arise, that for his own peace and comfort the Bishop is tempted to allow matters to drift, and does not interfere as he ought; or is too ready to compromise things when he should be resolute. But to incite His chosen servants to be faithful in the discharge of their duties, not to love their ease and quietness, but to “overcome,” He holds out a sure reward in the end. “Be *thou* faithful unto death,” saith the Lord to the Angel of the Church of Smyrna, “and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. ii. 10.)

And be it observed that the admonitions, promises, and threatenings named in these seven Epistles to the Angels of the Seven Churches are written, not only for those rulers to whom they were then sent, but to all who should hereafter, anywhere, and at any time, be lawfully called to rule in the Church of Christ. For to every one of these Epistles this exhortation is added, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." Not only must the message, sent unto any particular Church, be laid to heart by all the ministers and Christians of that Church, for they are all bound up together in the interests of it specially, and therefore should do all they severally can in supporting their Angel in the faithfully doing of his part; but what is said *to one* Church is said to *all* Churches, in all ages, wherever they may be; and especially *to the Bishops* of the Churches, who are put in charge and are held responsible to the Lord Jesus, for the flock intrusted to their care; for as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, these "that have the rule over you," and "watch for your souls"—and the words in a lower degree apply to all ministers—"must give account" hereafter of their stewardship. And, if there is one thought more than another which should severally fill them with a deep sense of the weighty and sacred character of the office they hold, it is this: that the omniscient eye of Jesus, from the throne of His glory, is more especially directed towards each one of these Rulers in the Church, as His agent and representative, to notice how

they severally perform their part, in the care and watchfulness which they exercise over that portion of the Lord's vineyard committed to them individually. The words of our Lord in the days of His ministry on the earth cannot be more applicable to any individuals than to Bishops, when He says: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made *ruler* over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." (St. Matt. xxiv. 45-47.) While on the contrary, if he neglects his duty or misuses his power, the lord of that servant "shall cut him asunder, and appoint him a position with the hypocrites."

As in the Epistle to the Angel of Ephesus, so in the Epistles to the other Angels, the Lord Jesus intimates that He has a perfect and personal knowledge of all that is going on in each of the Churches, and knows fully the condition and peculiar circumstances of each; as also how much depends on the conduct or rule of each of the Angels; for, as it has been stated, to each of them the Lord says: "I know thy works." Thus, He knew the tribulation and poverty which the Angel and Church at Smyrna had to endure; and the blasphemy of some Jews which he had to contend against. And the Lord informs him that further persecutions and sufferings await the Church which he governs. (Rev. ii. 9-10.) The Lord assures the Angel at Pergamos also, that He is aware of the peculiar

difficulties of *his* situation. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest," in a very wicked place, "even where Satan's seat is: and *thou* holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, in those days when Antipas, my faithful martyr, was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." (Rev. ii. 13.)

The Angel at Thyatira receives this message from "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like to a flame of fire. . . I know *thy* works, and charity, and services, and faith, and *thy* patience and *thy* works, and the last to be more than the first." (Rev. ii. 19.) The Angel at Sardis is told from the Lord, "*thou* hast a name to live, and art dead," and "I have not found thy work perfect before God." (Rev. iii. 1-2.) Some approval is given to the Angel at Philadelphia; (v. 8) but the Angel at Laodicea is accused of lukewarmness. (v. 15-16.) And this knowledge which the Lord Jesus has of each particular Church, and of the conduct of each individual Bishop, is not that of One who is afar off, but as of One present in these Churches and deeply interested in their welfare; He is *in the midst of the seven candlesticks* (Rev. i. 13), which are the Churches; He it is "who *walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*. (Rev. ii. 1.) This fact is thus repeated to make the impression of it more abiding.

The Divinity of Christ is constantly proclaimed in His Omniscience and Omnipresence, but the fact which particularly is to be borne in mind, and to which some allusion has been made, is, that the Lord

appears to make each individual Angel accountable for the state or condition of his respective Church, or Diocese. Of some things which they do He approves, but of other things He disapproves, and censures. And this appears not in one but *in all the Epistles*, though in various ways: so that "all the Churches may know," as Christ saith, "I am He that searcheth the reins and heart, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev. ii. 23.) Observe some of these particulars. As to the Angel at Ephesus, He said, "Nevertheless I have *this* against *thee*." So to the Angel at Pergamos, He writes, "I have a few things against *thee*, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, and those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Now, the Lord had not this fault to find with the Angel at Ephesus: he was not reproved for this but commended, in that he had tried the false teachers that were in his Church, and had found them to be impostors, and restrained their evil influence; which action shews that he had not hesitated to exercise the authority which the Lord had given him for the preservation of truth and good order; while the Angel at Pergamos had shamefully neglected to correct these disorders, when he had power to do so.

And so also with the Angel at Thyatira. While commending him for some of his works, the Lord tells him, much as He had done the two previously-named Angels: "notwithstanding I have a few things against *thee*." And the most important was similar to

that of the Angel at Pergamos,—a dereliction of duty, in not restraining evil teachers within his Church; “because *thou sufferest* that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornications, and to eat things offered to idols.” (Rev. ii. 20.) And it is to be observed, that the Lord does not blame these Angels of Pergamos and Thyatira, because false teachers and evil doers exist in their cities, but because they had tolerated them in the Communion of the Church; they had either made light of this thing, which the Lord hates, or had feared,—wanted courage, and were therefore unfit for their sacred office—to try and condemn them, as the Angel at Ephesus had done, by virtue of his authority: and thus much evil had arisen, through their culpability, for which the Lord holds them responsible. The words manifestly imply that individually they had power to exclude these people from the Church, otherwise they could not have been blamed for permitting them to remain in it. Neither does the Lord Jesus blame any of them, as Bishop Wordsworth says, “for *being Angels*: that is for occupying the chief place in their respective Churches: which He certainly *would* have done, if such a *pre-eminence* in His Church had not been in accordance with His will. On the contrary, Christ recognizes the *Angels* as the *Heads* and organs of their several *Churches*, through them. He recognizes the Seven Angels as the Official Representatives of the Seven Churches.”

Now, without going further, do not all these things shew that the authority and responsibility in each Church is, by the approval and sanction of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the ordering of His Apostles, placed in the hand of one individual; and not in the hands equally of all the ministers in any distinct portion of the Church? Indeed, so convinced are some of the Presbyterians that the Epistles addressed to the Seven Angels are written to individuals having some direction and control over other ministers, as well as the Church generally, that to make the fact fit into their system, they are driven to the conclusion that the Angel of the Church must be the Moderator of the Church, such as they have among them, but still contend that he cannot be a Bishop such as now exists among us. But even this concession will not serve their purpose; the Moderator has not the office that the Angel is said to have had; if they will examine these Seven Epistles they must soon see that this is the case.

For instance, has the Moderator among the Presbyterians in Scotland, and elsewhere, the power *in himself* to try, censure, and condemn those who preach any other doctrine than they hold, as the Angel of the Church of Ephesus did, or to sharply rebuke, or stop the mouths of such in their body, as Timothy, who was the Bishop at Ephesus previously, had done? Has he the authority in his own hands, as these Angels had, to repress disorders, or to reform abuses? The Presbyterians themselves *will not allow* that any of their Moderators have this power. For just as the

Chairman of Congregational Unions, the Moderator is chosen by the other ministers, and is subject to their rule; not they to his. As it has been said, "He may act as the organ of others, but not by the right of independent authority. He governs not the Church, and cannot therefore be made accountable for the evils in the Church." No! such an officer does not answer to that of the Angel, or to such as Timothy and Titus were, who had independent authority in themselves.

The fallacy of this theory, and how untenable is the supposition that Moderators fill the place of the Angels, will be better seen, and bring conviction home the sooner to some, if I here quote the forcible words of Dr. Bowden, in reply to those who would pare down, or wrest the Scriptures from their proper meaning, to suit their own peculiar views. He takes *the case of a Moderator* being censured, as one of the Angels was, and says; "When our Lord blamed and threatened the Angel of the Church of Sardis, might he not have said, 'Lord, why blamest thou me? I have no more authority in Thy Church in this city than other Presbyters. We do everything, as Thou very well knowest, by a plurality of votes, and those Presbyters who wish for a majority, for the purpose of beginning a reformation, have not been able to obtain it. I need not tell thee that I am no more than the Moderator of the Presbytery, appointed to count their votes, and keep order. Upon what dictate, then, of reason—upon what principle of justice, am I to be

blamed for the defections and corruptions in the Church? As a Moderator, I have no relation to *the Church*; my relation is entirely to the Presbytery, and there I have but a casting vote. What then can I do? Why am I addressed in particular, and threatened with excision unless I repent? For my personal faults, I humbly beg forgiveness, but I cannot possibly acknowledge any guilt as the governor of this Church, when I bear no such character.' Might not the Angel of the Church of Sardis have addressed Christ with the strictest propriety in this manner? And does not this show how utterly inconsistent your scheme of Church Government is with these Epistles?" (Letters, Vol. I, p. 117.)

Though various denominations of Dissenters have set themselves against the rule of the Episcopate, and are very chary of acknowledging it, nay, will condemn it as unscriptural from their own point of view, having set up other forms of Church government; yet when viewed in the light of Scripture generally they are met with endless and most perplexing difficulties, in which they get entangled, and from which they cannot free themselves, until they acknowledge that Diocesan Episcopacy is the rule established by Christ and His Apostles in the Church at the beginning, and for all generations. For, if it appears that the seven Angels were so many single persons invested with supreme authority in the Seven Churches,—as it is evident from an examination of these Epistles—then there can be no reason to doubt whether they were the Bishops of

these Churches; a Bishop being nothing else but one who has chief authority in the Church in any part, over which he is appointed. "On the system of Episcopacy, (investing one man with the management and control of a section of the Church, and making him responsible for its irregularities or honoured for its excellences) the Letters to the Seven Churches are easy of comprehension;" but not otherwise.

Indeed, the learned Grotius, himself a Presbyterian, is constrained to give utterance to these remarkable words, respecting these letters which appear in the Revelation of St. John: "Those who understand the Churches themselves by the Angels, manifestly contradict the sacred writings. For the Candlesticks are the Churches, says Christ, but the stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches. It is wonderful whither the humour of contradiction may not carry men, when they dare to confound things which the Holy Spirit evidently distinguishes. We do not deny that the name of *Angel* may be suited to every pastor in a certain general signification; but here it is manifestly written to one in every Church. Was there therefore only one pastor in every city? No, indeed. For even in Paul's time many Presbyters were appointed at Ephesus to feed the Church of God. Why, therefore, are letters sent to one in every Church, if no one had a certain peculiar and eminent function? Christ writing to these Bishops, thus eminent among the Clergy, undoubtedly approved of this *Episcopal superiority*." (De Imperio Summarum Potestatum Circa Sacra, &c.)

This passage is very conclusive on the question, and should carry great weight with it.

In short, how can we doubt that Diocesan Episcopacy is a Divine Institution, even if there had been no other evidence of this in Scripture than what the book of Revelation affords us, when it is *twice said* that Jesus Himself holds the stars (which are the Angels or Bishops) in His right hand. (See Rev. i. 16 and ii. 1.) For as the stars are fixed in the Heavens in their appointed orbits by Divine decree, so are we to understand that these Angels or Bishops were appointed in their respective spheres by the ordinance of Christ, the Head of the Church. And as the stars are upheld in the heavens by God's will, so Christ will *uphold*, and *vouchsafes* His assistance, presence, and blessing to all faithful Bishops, even as He plainly promised when He said to His Apostles—whose successors they are—"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." As stars, it is intimated that they are to be as burning and shining lights in the world. Of all true Christians, Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world:" but if said to any more than others, it must be to the Bishops of the Church; for it is their province and business to enlighten the Church, both by their life and doctrine. They are not to live to themselves, but are appointed to a conspicuous place to give light to others, to direct and influence, to cheer and encourage the pilgrims of light, as they walk through the night of this world to the kingdom of glory above. Christ *holds* them in His hand, or

the world would soon extinguish them, for the world has such a peculiar hatred against them; and cannot endure their faithfulness—their witness against evil doings, and against error, and their witness for Christ. He holds them in His hands as most precious to Him in their faithfulness as His representatives on earth; and it is through His holding them that they endure, and that their office and authority in the Church is continued to this day.

I had more to say about the Angels of these Seven Churches, or Dioceses in Asia Minor: especially as to the testimony from ancient Ecclesiastical history corroborating the existence of Bishops in the several places: and further, as to the position occupied by St. John, being similar to the rank of an Archbishop; or to his occupying the position of a Patriarch—as it is most likely that his jurisdiction extended over other clusters of Churches than these, which he cared for, as in St. Paul's case. The authority of St. John and of the other Apostles seems to indicate and foreshadow a more enlarged jurisdiction or combination of Churches than that of an Archbishopric; designed for the further preservation of unity; so that these several Churches being joined together by bands and ligaments, might all teach the same truths, and walk by the same rule; just as St. Paul ordained in all the Churches under him.

But here I must conclude the testimonies of Scripture; by saying, that in its pages different persons, at different times, and in different places, witness to

what we must surely hold to be the Will and Design of Christ,—as to the rule and government of His Church, which He undoubtedly caused to be built and constituted according to the instructions He gave: so as to insure, as far as possible, all true Christians becoming one in Him; being one body, with Christ as their only One or universal Head. First, we have, as it has been amply shown, the Twelve Apostles commissioned by Christ to lay the foundation, and the government of His Church, at Jerusalem. Then the testimony of St. Paul, who was acknowledged by the Twelve as an Apostle, that he was of the same body with that which they had founded, and that his rule was the same as theirs in all the Churches of which he had the care. And then, thirdly and finally, the testimony of St. John, about thirty years after that of St. Paul's, in the Epistles written to the Seven Churches at the dictation of Christ, witnessing to the same rule and government of the Church existing, as at the first established, and that it had the approval and testimony of the Lord Jesus Himself, that it was according to His own Design, such as He would be with, and uphold as His till the end of the world, as He had promised.

In bringing this testimony from Holy Scripture, then, to a close, we contend—as we have endeavoured to shew in this and the preceding Chapters—that there is abundant, clear, and satisfactory evidence, sufficient for all reasonable thinking men, to be found in the

Word of God as to the Basis of true Christian Unity, as laid down and established for all generations by Christ and His Apostles. And to preserving this sacred unity, there need be no doubt in the minds of all honest men, that there is to be but *One Body*, or Society, for all Christians, as it was at the beginning: for so had the Lord ordained, and the Apostles had ordered it. Then there is to be *an appointed ministry* of divers orders in the Church, as at the beginning also, lawfully called and sent by those in authority, to whose teaching the people of the Lord are to give heed, and through whom God's holy Word and Sacraments are to be administered. And thus there is to be *an authority in the Church*, composed of *its chief rulers*, who, though bound together as one corporate or collegiate body, are severally responsible for that portion of Christ's Church committed to their care. So that the whole Body, emanating from Christ, the Head, is, as St. Paul says, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and is to go on, "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the Body."

But yet—as we know and see from the present condition of the Christian world, notwithstanding all this, notwithstanding the Word of God has so fully and plainly unfolded to us the means and way whereby the unity of Christians is to be maintained, according to Christ's will—sad divisions and dissensions do arise and abound, and set aside the great design of Christ.

And this is done, too, by those who profess, with us to take the Bible as the standard of their Faith and Practice.

We have already shewn how this arises from men not reading these same holy Scriptures in the same light and in the same sense as that in which they were written ; but depending upon their own private judgment, or upon the private judgment of certain teachers whom they look up to, they give to them an interpretation and meaning, in those things wherein they differ—and which have led to these divisions and dissensions—which they were not designed to bear ; and so use and read them as to inculcate and uphold certain views of their own, and support and give countenance to the errors or circumstances in which they find themselves placed.

The position and views which these men take, who are separated from the body of Christians, are of some standing now : and we believe that many of those who adhere to them, think that they are acting conscientiously right, and in accordance with the written Word. And there are many of them whose zeal, purity, charity, love to Christ and devotion to His service, and desire to win souls for Him, are to be admired and emulated by all, and lead us to yearn for more brotherly Christian intercourse with them ; and whom —though not joined with us in the communion of the body of Christ, as historically descended to us ; and so unwittingly, it may be, breaking the unity which He and His Apostles ordained for Christians

in all ages—we still hope will be saved, even as we hope to be.

But let us not say, with too many in the present day, “we must agree to differ:” for this is but to agree to disobey Christ, who would have all true Christians to be united in one body: let us rather say: “We must endeavour to come to some agreement on this important matter; and contend for the truth of the Gospel, until it becomes the more plain and clear to all, and makes them desirous of finding it.” *There is one body now*, even as there was at the beginning. It is as “a city set on an hill;” which Christians are not only to belong to, but to uphold and defend with all their soul and strength. It is Christ’s will. This should be sufficient. And while “speaking the truth in love,” let us learn how to go about it.

When heresies and schisms arose in the ancient Catholic Church; the inquiry of all the leading Christians and rulers of the Church was: “Is this in accordance with the Holy Scriptures?” And then, “How was this doctrine, or this rule and custom, received and observed by the Primitive Christians?”—feeling that they had been directly instructed in these important matters by the Apostles themselves, and the first teachers of Christianity.

And when the Church in various countries had to contend with the errors and usurpations of the Papacy, the same inquiries were made; and finding that there was no real foundation for its monstrous claims and

arbitrary proceedings, either in Scripture or in the Primitive Church, they rejected it altogether; and the early Reformers sought to restore the Church and the Christian religion to the standard of the Scriptures as manifested in the teaching, ways, and customs of the Primitive Christians.

And it is to the testimony that some of these earlier Christians afford us regarding their Faith and Practice, that we now turn, to see how they obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we, who are divided, may the better learn the same; and become more united in one body in Christ, as they were.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN WRITERS AFTER THE APOSTLES ON UNITY.

IT is no blind regard that we would pay to what the ancient Fathers say. Some of them wrote about many things which then occupied public attention, but which have now little or no interest for us. They were fallible men like ourselves, and apt to err in their judgment, and may in some instances have said foolish things or been mistaken in what they stated. But the value of this testimony arises from these first Christian writers being *witnesses* of what the Apostles instituted, and the meaning of what they said, as written in Holy Scripture. This is especially the case with respect to the Apostolic Fathers, who were intimately acquainted with what happened, and had a complete understanding of the state of things in the Church, as they were settled and left to them, by these divinely appointed Founders: for in their writings they bear testimony to things as they saw them; and, on those matters and points wherein they agree, we may the more confidently rely. A few of these men were the companions, followers, and immediate successors of the Apostles: they and others were Confessors and Martyrs who willingly died for the truth of what they believed and taught; they shed their blood freely for Christ's sake:—"Men, whose voices were heard proclaiming

the doctrines of the Cross in every strange land—whose motto and principle of action was, that their Master must inherit the earth,—men, whose virtues were too heroic, and their aims too lofty, to be comprehended in these degenerate days—and on the record of whose self-denying labours, we now look back as upon a vision of past beauty which has faded from the earth, and for whose return we scarcely dare even to hope.” They were men whose writings have been appealed to by the most eminent of Christians in successive generations, as to what was the true way when differences arose, and by whose words they were guided as to what was right. They were men also who were chiefly concerned in authenticating which were the inspired writings of the New Testament, and handing them down to us as the Word of God.

There are many important truths and principles of the Gospel respecting which, those who differ and separate from one another, mostly agree. There is therefore no need to touch upon these here, or allude to them. It is only to those views and ways which have caused divisions and bitter strife that our attention should be chiefly confined. And we want to learn from the inner life of these Primitive Christians, how the members of Christ’s Church were kept together in the bonds of unity, notwithstanding the heresies and schisms that arose. We want to know from their own words what organization they had among them for this end—whether the system that was at work among them, was, upon the whole, that which the Scriptures

unfold to us—was that we have seen the Apostles instituted? We desire to learn whether the early Christians, within two hundred say, were careful to preserve the Constitution of the Church, as it had been settled by the Apostles according to the design of Christ; and whether they handed it on to others who were to succeed them, unimpaired. This regards the matter.

And the manner in which their testimony comes to us, increases its force and value. “They wrote no arguments to prove the nature of the Apostolic ministry,” says an able writer. “They set forth no elaborate proofs of the Constitution of the Church. These were truths which in that day *none disputed*, and no formal defence was necessary. We learn all these things incidentally, as they are brought forward in connection with other features of the Church, or the ordinary instructions by which they sought to train up in holiness the people of their charge. No writer in that age thought of proving that the Church was governed by Bishops, any more than he did of establishing by argument the fact that Rome was governed by an Emperor, and the provinces by governors under him. Both are merely alluded to as established historical facts. If then they who were contemporary with the Apostles, and they who for three centuries followed them, all speak of the three Orders of the Ministry as being defined and established in their day, may we not—adding this to the testimony of Scripture—believe that it was the divinely constituted form which our Lord prescribed to His Church?”

This is just the kind of testimony peculiarly calculated to assure us of its being true: and will best help us to understand how they received the Word of God, and how the Primitive Church was fashioned according to it, especially in their observing the principle of unity, enjoined by our Lord.

In the former volume, Chapter VII., we drew attention to the evidence given in the Apostolical Canons, a work of great value, and proved to have been in existence among the Primitive Christians; and by which the affairs of the Church were regulated as the outcome and development of the Apostles' rule. We just recall this work, because from it we learn very clearly, that there was but one definite Form of Church Government among the Primitive Christians; and that the principles of its Constitution are just those that were initiated, set forth and unfolded to us by the Apostles in the New Testament. There was evidently not another body acknowledged as the Church in existence; there was not any other Form of Church Government than that of the Episcopacy, sanctioned or permitted for Christians to live by; and it was the only rule also evidently accepted by them as the basis for their preserving true Christian unity among themselves.

Again and again in this authenticated document do we hear of *the three-fold Order of Ministers* in the Church, as Bishops, Priests or Elders, and Deacons; and the several relations they bear to one another, that the Bishops everywhere are to bear rule, and the

Priests and Deacons to be subservient to them; and the special duties that severally belong to each of them. Priests and Deacons are to be ordained by one Bishop. A Bishop to be consecrated by two or three Bishops. (I. and II.) And that neither Bishop, Priest, or Deacon might put away his wife under the pretext of religion; and if any one did it how it made him liable to excommunication; hence the Celibacy of the Clergy was clearly not enforced.

I do not purpose to go through the various particulars there set down, but would refer the reader to this authenticated documentary evidence, that he may see, and be fully persuaded that there was not only one definite and specific rule or system of Church Government, but that this system was regarded as the bond of unity instituted by the Apostles; and its several Canons as the means ordained for preserving order and peace in the Church among the many parts of the body, and the various classes of Christians. This document alone is sufficient amply to corroborate the testimony of Scripture, as to how its rule was carried out in the Church of which it speaks; and to give us some distinct idea of what was done and said by the Apostles of Christ to maintain a sure and certain basis of unity for all Christians. But we pass on now to the witness of particular writers.

We would draw special attention to what can be learned from the Apostolic Fathers; that is, those who in their early lives lived and conversed with the Apostles, knew their ways, and the meaning of what they said;

the customs and ordinances they enjoined, and the design they endeavoured to carry out with respect to the Church. They were not only instructed by the Apostles, but guided, trained, and disciplined by them as members of Christ's Church; some of them that we shall name were made Bishops by them, and were therefore well qualified to speak of what they saw and heard: and their testimony is, we think, far more to be depended upon and preferred than the crude, arbitrary, and necessarily uncertain judgments or opinions of many modern writers, which are so various that they condemn one another, and only darken the truth, and confuse the honest-minded Christian.

The first is that of ST. CLEMENT, of Rome. He was a fellow-worker with St. Paul, who bestowed upon him the noblest commendation language can frame. When writing to the Phillipians, the Apostle says: "Clement also, and other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the Book of Life." (iv. 3.) Cave, in his *Lives of the Fathers*, tells us, that having been appointed Bishop of Rome, he held that office nearly ten years, until his martyrdom. When Bishop, he wrote to the Corinthians. The genuineness of this Epistle is doubted by some because his name is not attached to it. But there need be no reasonable question on this account, about the authorship of it; as it was very early acknowledged as his by several authorities. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, cir: A.D. 170. (Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 23.) Hegesippus, cir: A.D. 180. (Euseb. *E. H.* iii, 16 and iv. 23.) Irenæas, a few years

later. (Euseb. E. H. v. 6.) And in the Apostolical Canons, after enumerating the books of the Old and New Testament, two Epistles of Clement are spoken of as well, to be read in Churches and revered by both the Clergy and the Laity. It seems necessary to give these authorities to satisfy the searchers for truth, of the genuineness of the testimony of St. Clement. The object of his first Epistle is, to promote a spirit of due subjection among the Corinthians to those who were over them, that no one should intrude into the office of such as were above him, but that each in his respective station should discharge his appropriate duties. The very language which he uses, and the comparisons by which he illustrates his meaning, prove most fully that in those days, "God, by His Divine providence, had appointed divers Orders of Ministers in His Church." (Office for Ordination.)

Now we read out of Clement's first Epistle such words as these: "We are grieved to hear that one or two head-strong ring-leaders have fanned the flame of discord among you. This was not your wont in former days. Your firm faith, your sober piety, your large hospitality, your sound knowledge, were the admiration of all. *Authority was duly respected by you.*"

"Submission and contentment were the rule of your lives. The teaching of God was in your breasts: the Passion of Christ before your eyes. Peace and good-will reigned among you. Spiritual graces and incessant prayers distinguished you. You loved the brethren: you bore no malice to any: you loathed

faction: you rejoiced in doing good. The ordinances of God were graven on your hearts."

He then goes on to condemn those who, like Jeshurun of old, have waxed wanton with plenty, and caused strife, and faction, and open war; and warns them against bringing a curse upon themselves and their followers. He then calls them to a better mind by observing:—

"All creation moves on in peace and harmony. Night and Day succeed each other. The heavenly bodies roll in their proper orbits. The earth brings forth in due season. The ocean keeps within its appointed bounds. . . . Let us, therefore, offend foolish and arrogant men rather than God. Let us honour Christ; *let us respect our rulers.*"

"We are fighting as soldiers under our heavenly Captain. *Subordination of rank and obedience to orders*, are necessary conditions in an army. There must be harmonious working of high and low. So is it with the human body. The head must work with the feet, and the feet with the head, for the health and safety of the whole."

"So therefore let the health of the whole body be our aim. Let weak and strong, rich and poor, work together in harmony. Let each man exercise his special gift in humility of heart, and without vain glory, remembering that we owe everything to God, and give thanks to Him for His goodness."

"This being plain, we must do all things decently and in order, as our heavenly Master wills us. The

appointed times, the fixed places, the proper ministers, must be respected in our offerings. So only will they be acceptable to God. In the law of Moses, the *High-priest, the Priest, the Levites, the Laity*, all have their distinctive functions."

This is in allusion to a similar order existing every where in the Christian Church: that is, *the Bishop, the Presbyter or Priest, the Deacon, and the Laity*, and this is said in opposition to those Corinthians who would pay no regard to ecclesiastical order, but resisted and spoke contemptuously of those in authority, that they might *set themselves up*, and be more accounted of by the people. He then continues:—

"Let every man, therefore, take his proper place *The Apostles were sent by Christ*, as Christ was sent by the Father. Having this commission they preached the Kingdom of God, and *appointed Presbyters and Deacons in every place*. This was no new institution And no marvel, if the Apostles of Christ thus ordained ministers, seeing there was the precedent of Moses. When the authority of the priests was assailed, he took the rods of the twelve tribes, and placed them within the Tabernacle, saying, that God had chosen the tribe whose rod should bud. On the morrow when the doors were opened, Aaron's rod alone had budded, and the office of the Priesthood was vindicated."

"So likewise the Apostles foresaw these feuds. They therefore provided for *a succession of tried persons*, who should fulfil the office of the ministry. Thus it is no light sin of which you are guilty in ejecting men

so appointed, when they discharge their duties faithfully So likewise *our Apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that contentions would arise on account of the EPISCOPATE.* For which cause, having a perfect foreknowledge of this, *they appointed persons (over the Churches), as we said before, and then gave directions, that on their death, other approved men should succeed to their ministrations."*

Clement is evidently under the impression that the Constitution of the Church, as well as its Doctrine, fell within the compass of our Lord's instructions, and that provision was made for it according to His suggestions. After awhile he continues:—

"To end these strifes and divisions, have you forgotten that, as there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, so also there is one body? Would you rend asunder its limbs? Remember how our Lord denounces the man, through whom the offences shall come. Already have your feuds been a scandal to many, and yet they continue."

"Read the Epistle which Paul wrote to you long ago. See how he condemns strife and party spirit in you. Yet, then you had this excuse, that you chose as leaders Apostles and Apostolic men. Now even this palliation of your offence is wanting. It is sad indeed that two or three ring-leaders should sully the fair name of the Corinthian Church, and bring dishonour on the name of Christ."

"Let us put our sin away. Let us fall on our knees and implore God's pardon. Righteousness in

Christ is the only gate which leads to Life. Is any one faithful, wise, learned, energetic, pure? He should be the more humble in proportion as he is greater. He should work for the common good."

There are many beautiful passages found in this Epistle, especially those on Love, "which unites us."

Thus he says: "Who shall tell the power and beauty of love? Love unites us to God; love is all enduring; love is free from pride and vulgarity; love brooks no strife or discord. In love all the Saints were perfected. In love God took us to Himself. In love Christ gave His Body for our bodies, and His Life for our lives. In this marvellous love let us pray God that we may live." And towards the close of his precious words, he says:—

"Above all, ought the leaders of these factions to deny themselves for the common good. . . . Is any noble, tender-hearted, loving? Let him declare his willingness to withdraw (from the communion of those who have caused strife and division in the Church), that the flock of Christ may be at peace. He will not want a place of retirement."

"And do you leaders of the schism, submit to the Elders, and ask pardon of God on your knees. It is far better that you should be of no account, so that the flock of Christ may be in peace. Remember how sternly Wisdom rebukes the disobedient in the book of Proverbs. She will laugh them to scorn when destruction cometh as a tempest. They mocked at her counsels before, and she will not hear them then."

With the hope that the messengers he has sent to them will soon return, "and bring glad tidings of harmony and peace restored among you," Clement concludes with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, and with all; through Him be glory to God for ever."

I need only add that it will be interesting to the reader to learn that the *effect* of this godly admonition and counsel was followed by good results. Hege-sippus, soon after his mention of this letter, sent to heal the division of the Church, adds: — "And the Church of Corinth remained in the right doctrine till the Episcopate of Prenias," their Bishop. (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. iv. 22.) See Bishop Lightfoot's "Apostolic Fathers."

The next testimony is from ST. IGNATIUS: of whom some little account must be given, that we may the better understand his words. He is known to have been brought up among the Apostles, and trained and educated by them; admitted to their familiar discourses, and permitted to join with them in partaking of the sacred mysteries. It was the belief of the Syriac Church, that he was the Child that Jesus took up in His arms, "and set in the midst; and said unto His Disciples, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (St. Matt. xviii. 2, 3; Mark ix. 36), and on this account bore the name of Theophorus, the God-carried or the God-bearer. This is, however, disputed by some of the Fathers, though admitted by

others. However this may be, he is spoken of more particularly as the disciple of St. John ; and that when he was grown up to man's estate he was made Bishop of Antioch, the Metropolis of Syria, by the joint action of St. Peter and St. Paul, who were then living ; and that he faithfully continued to guide the Church through the stormy period that followed for forty years, the greater part of which were *in the first century*.

About the year 106 or 107 the persecutions under Trajan were carried on against the Christians : and when the Emperor came to Antioch, he found Ignatius, the great Bishop, resolute in confessing the faith of Christ. When asked his name, he replied, "Ignatius Theophorus." And when the Emperor demanded the meaning of Theophorus, Ignatius answered, "One who beareth God in his heart." Trajan could not understand him ; but, being the Chief of the Christians, and because he would not deny Christ, he condemned him to be sent to Rome in chains under a guard of soldiers, and there thrown as a prey to the wild beasts, for the pastime of the people. At this he is said to have greatly rejoiced, and thanked God that he had been accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

They were obliged to take a circuitous route in those days ; and on their way they came to Smyrna, where they had occasion to stay some time. This proved a great joy to Ignatius, since it allowed him time to hold sweet communion with Polycarp, the celebrated Bishop of the place, and to receive and

hold intercourse with the chiefs and messengers of other Churches, who came to see, and have the blessing and counsel of Ignatius, on his way to Martyrdom for their Lord. Onesimus, the Bishop of Ephesus, came with four others; Damas, still young for a Bishop, came from Magnesia, and Polybius from Tralles, to testify their heart-felt esteem and love for Ignatius.

These visits, and other places where Ignatius tarried on his journey towards Rome, gave occasion for his writing to different Churches, by way of taking leave of them, and urging them to continue firm in the faith and in the Unity of the Church, as well as in the exercise of all Christian virtues. These letters have happily been preserved, and are of great weight and importance to us at the present day, as they afford most valuable testimony on the points wherein many differ from the Church.

It is necessary, before quoting from them, to clear away a certain doubtfulness which at one time hung over them, and has been referred to by some for the purpose of disparaging their authority. It appears that they were so highly esteemed, and carried such weight with them in the days of old; that other letters, which were not written by him, were introduced and spread abroad as his. Hence, those who now hold with the Presbyterian and Congregationalist views, would say, "Oh, see, here are some of the Epistles of this Ignatius, which are confessedly not genuine; what dependence can be placed upon the rest? They are evidently of a later date, because they speak so strongly of

subordination to Bishops, and must have been written by some one else." But is it not worth while to look thoroughly into this matter, and ascertain whether there can be any truth in this insinuation? For if the validity of the seven Epistles, that Eusebius speaks of, can be established, the testimony they give is most valuable for our argument, since they are written by one of the highest repute among the Christians, within a hundred years of the death of Christ.

That we eschew some Epistles, written under his name, as forgeries is no good reason why we should condemn the rest as forgeries also. On the contrary, had there not been some valid Epistles, which were held to be very valuable, there would not have been these forged ones; hence, the forged ones show that there must have been some Epistles of great esteem that were genuine. Because we meet with some counterfeit coin, we do not condemn all coin as counterfeit; on the contrary we know that there is coin of full value, that will pass current and be accepted: and there would not have been such counterfeit coin had there not been other genuine coin of real worth. Now, what we should do in the one case we must do in the other. If there is the least doubt about any of them, and we are particularly anxious to know whether they be genuine, we must have them thoroughly tested and examined by competent authority.

And this has been done in regard to the Ignatian Epistles, by some very able scholars—Archbishop Ussher

and others, at the beginning of the seventeenth century: and later still, within the last forty years, by the learned Bishop Lightfoot, and others. The result of the Bishop's labours, which occupied him during the better part of thirty years, appeared only in the year 1885, in two volumes of 1849 pages: and the work has been pronounced by those able to judge, as superior to anything yet published; and as the most learned and careful of Patristic writings that the present century has produced. Those, then, who wish to be satisfied of the genuineness of the Seven Letters of St. Ignatius should peruse these volumes, or if unable to do so, should read one or both of two able articles, one written in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1886, the other in the *Church Quarterly Review* of the same date. And the evidence shows that the seven Epistles alluded to are thoroughly genuine, and to be depended upon to give us a clear view as to how the Church of Christ was governed, and how its unity and faith were preserved *within a hundred years of our Saviour's death*, and probably from seven to twelve years after the death of St. John the Divine. The Bishop's conclusion as regards the external evidence, may be given in these few words:—"No Christian writings of the second century, very few writings of antiquity, whether Christian or pagan, *are so well authenticated as the Epistles of Ignatius*. If the Epistle of Polycarp be accepted as genuine, the authentication is perfect." Now this searching ordeal through which these ancient writings have passed, to prove their genuine-

ness, is valuable evidence also to show how we may, with some confidence, rely upon the other historical statements of Eusebius, which are of so much interest and weight regarding the state of the early Church of Christ, and what it had to endure for the faith of Christ. And as the statements of Eusebius about the Ignatian Epistles form parts of the evidence in favour of their genuineness, concise portions of it may here be fitly introduced, not only on account of their interest as to Ignatius himself, but for their showing, among other things, the way in which these Epistles came to be written : Eusebius writes :—

“ Tradition says that he (Ignatius) was sent away from Syria to Rome, and was cast as food to wild beasts, on account of his testimony for Christ : and being carried through Asia (Minor) under a most rigid custody, he fortified the different Churches in the cities where he tarried, by his discourses and exhortations, particularly to caution them more about the heresies, which even then were springing up and prevailing. He exhorted them to adhere firmly to the tradition or rule of the Apostles ; which, for the sake of greater security, he deemed it necessary to attest, by committing it to writing.

“ When, therefore, he came to Smyrna, where Polycarp was, he wrote one Epistle, viz., that to the Church of Ephesus, in which he mentions its pastor Onesimus ; another also to the Church in Magnesia, which is situated on the Meander, in which he again makes mention of Damas, the Bishop ; another also

to the Church of the Trallians, of which he states that Polybius was then Bishop. To these may be added, the Epistle to the Church at Rome, which also contains an exhortation, not to disappoint him in his ardent hope, by refusing to endure Martyrdom."

It appears that some of his friends had gone on before to Rome, to persuade some of the leading Christians to make interest with those left in authority to spare Ignatius, or obtain a reprieve for him; and he wrote to them, desiring that they would do no such thing, as this would be to rob him of his hope and crown in dying for his Lord: so ready and eager was he to suffer death for Christ's sake. Further on Eusebius continues:—

"After he had left Smyrna, he wrote an exhortation from Troas to those in Philadelphia; and particularly to Polycarp who was Bishop there: (that is in Smyrna,) whom he designates as an Apostolic man, and as a good and faithful shepherd, commending the flock of Antioch (Ignatius's own See) to him, requesting him to exercise a diligent oversight of the Church. Writing to the Smyrnians, he has also employed words respecting Jesus."

These, if counted up, just make the seven Epistles. And now, without further delay let us adduce the testimony they afford in support of these matters for which we contend.

The first Epistle is that to the Church of the EPHESIANS. It is the same Church over which St. Paul at the beginning appointed Timothy as Bishop; and

to the Angel or Bishop of which, at a later period, an Epistle is addressed, in the book of the Revelation. From what Ignatius says, it would appear that the Ephesians had taken good heed to the rebuke administered by St. John at Christ's bidding; and had recovered from their falling condition; for thus Ignatius begins his Epistle to them:—

“I welcome in God's behalf that well-beloved name, which ye have attained in all righteousness, according to the Faith and Love which is in Jesus Christ our Saviour: for that being followers of God, and stirring yourselves up by the Blood of God, ye have perfectly accomplished the work that belonged to you, when ye heard that I came bound from Syria, for the common name and hope; expecting with your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome, that so by suffering I may become indeed the Disciple of Him, ‘who gave Himself to God, an Offering and Sacrifice for us.’ How many ye be, that be called by the name of God, I have heard from Onesimus, whose love is beyond all words—*your Bishop* according to the flesh; whom I beseech you, by Jesus Christ, to love, and that ye would all be like unto him. And blessed be God, who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such a Bishop.”

Herein we may observe, by the way, the Antenicene testimony that is given to the truth, that the Primitive Christians emphatically believed in Jesus Christ *as God*: and further that an excellent Bishop ruled over the whole Church of Ephesus, wherein there

were "many" Christians. Ignatius then speaks of those who had accompanied the Bishop.

"As to my fellow servant, Barrhus, who is *your Deacon*, in things pertaining to God, I pray that he may abide with you, to the honour of both you, and of your Bishop. And Crocus also—worthy both of God and of you, whom I have received as the sample of your love—has in all things refreshed me, as the Father of your Lord Jesus Christ shall also refresh him, together with Onesimus, and Barrhus, and Euplus and Fronto, in seeing whom I have seen the love of you all. And may I always have joy of you, if I be worthy of it! It is, therefore, fitting that you should by all means glorify Jesus Christ, who hath glorified you: that by a uniform obedience 'ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; and may all speak the same thing;' and that *being subject to your Bishop, and his Presbytery*, ye may be sanctified in all things."

In this passage, moreover, we have the three Orders of the ministry in the Church clearly indicated. Three, and no more. The Bishop, his Presbytery, and the office of Deacon. And as clearly also is it indicated that the Bishop is to rule, and all the Clergy and Laity are to be *uniformly obedient*. But these points are confirmed by other words:—

"For Jesus Christ, our inseparable Life, in the mind of the Father; like as the Bishops,—*appointed even unto the utmost bounds of the earth*,—are after the mind of Christ."

“Wherefore it will become you to *concur in the mind of your Bishop*, as ye also do. For your famous *Presbytery*, worthy of God, is knit as closely *to its Bishop, as the strings are to the harp*. Therefore by your unanimity and harmonious love JESUS CHRIST is sung: and each of you taketh part in the chorus: that so being *attuned together in one mind*, and taking up the song of God, *ye may with one voice, and in a perfect unity*, sing to the FATHER by Jesus Christ: to the end that by this means He may hear you, and perceive by your works, that ye are indeed the members of His Son. Wherefore it is profitable for you to live in *blameless unity*, that so ye may have fellowship with God.”

Thus we see that God’s design was that all things should work together in a sweet and beautiful order and concord, through the ministry of the Bishop; which according to the will of Christ, *had been already established in all parts*. And then enforcing the value and necessity of Christians keeping to the unity of the Church, he continues:—

“For if I, in this little time, have held such communion with your Bishop, I mean not earthly, but spiritual; how much more must I think you blessed, who are so joined to him, as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father: that so all things may agree (*symphonize*, is the Greek expression), in the same unity! Let no man deceive himself; if a man be not within the Altar, he faileth of the Bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two

be of such power, as we are told, how much more that of the Bishop and the whole Church? He, therefore, that does not come together into the same place with it, is proud, and has already condemned himself. For it is written, 'God resisteth the proud!' Let us take heed, therefore, that we do not set ourselves against the Bishop, in order that we may be subject to God." Bishop Lightfoot's comment on this passage is, "Let us obey our Bishop, if we would be God's people."

"And the more any seeth his Bishop keep silence, the more let him reverence him. For whomsoever the Master of the house sendeth to His own Household, we ought so to receive, as we would Him that sent him. It is plain, then, that we ought to look to the Bishop, even as to the Lord Himself. And truly Onesimus doth greatly commend your good order in God; in that ye all live according to the truth, and that no heresy has a home among you, but ye hearken to no man above Jesus Christ, speaking to you in truth."

There are many more words given of valuable godly counsel, but forasmuch as they do not directly touch upon the points in question, I shall pass on to the next Epistle written by Ignatius.

Writing to the MAGNESIANS, among other things, Ignatius says:—

"Seeing now it is my privilege to behold you, through Damas, your most holy *Bishop*, and your worthy *Presbyters*, Bassas, and Apollonias, and your *Deacon*,

my fellow labourer Sotio, whose friendship may I ever enjoy, because he is subject to his Bishop as to the grace of God, and to the Presbytery as to an institution of Jesus Christ, I determined to write unto you.

“Your duty likewise is it, not to bear yourselves towards your Bishop with a freedom proportioned to his youth, but according to the power of God the Father, to *concede to him all homage*. As I am aware the holy Presbyters do, you take no occasion from his apparent youthfulness for the station, but as wise men in a godly wisdom submit yourselves to him; yet not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ — the Bishop of us all. Meet therefore it is, that for the honour of Him who wills it, ye should present an obedience that is after no hypocritical fashion; since in any wise, if ye deceive your visible Bishop, you trifle rather with the Bishop invisible, and so the question is not with flesh, but with God who seeth the secrets.”

From which passages we not only again distinctly see the three Orders of ministers in the Primitive Church,—Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon—but can clearly distinguish the difference between them, that there is a gradation in their several positions—one above the other, the Deacon above the Laity, the Presbyter above the Deacon, and the Bishop above and over all. All are to be subject to him, and all are to pay him — though he may be younger than many of them — due reverence and obedience, and respect him for the office he bears; and as one commissioned by God, with authority to act for Him.

And this beautiful order and concord is still further confirmed by another passage from this Epistle :—

“Seeing now that, through the persons aforementioned, I have seen you all gathered together in faith and love, take good heed, I charge you, that you do all things in a spirit of godly concord :—*the Bishop* holding the presidency over you in the place of God ; and the *Presbyters* in the place of the Council of the Apostles ; and *your Deacons*, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, Who was with the Father before the worlds, hath appeared in the last days. Assuming, therefore, all of you *this scheme of godly unity*, give heed one to another ; and let no man regard his neighbour in a fleshly spirit, but love ye one another continually in Jesus Christ. Let there be in you *nothing which can divide you* ; but *be ye made one in the Bishop, and those that preside over you*, as an example and lesson of your immortality.” That all the ministers of Jesus Christ should be equal in station and office seems a thing unknown and forbidden : they were not, evidently, all on the same level and rank ; for God had appointed *divers orders* of ministers in His Church. Supreme authority and power for the ordering or controlling the Church *is not placed* in the hands of the Presbyters, or of the Deacons, or in that of the members of the Church generally, though they are to be consulted and their advice had regard to, especially in those things that are temporal, and wherein they can help. All the ministers have special duties

to perform, and a certain degree of authority is intrusted to them; but supreme authority is lodged in the hands of one person alone, appointed over them by a higher authority, and to whom they must all yield obedience; and from, and through whom all the authority, which the subordinate officers exercise, flows. And this system of subordination to Episcopal authority, is to be received, not as emanating from man, or of man's contrivance, but as ordained of God, by Jesus Christ through His Apostles.

Another quotation or two from this Epistle will still further shew us in what light this system was viewed by the Primitive Christians:—

“As therefore our Lord, being united with the Father, did nothing without Him, neither of Himself, nor by His Apostles; so neither do you do any thing apart from the Bishop and the Presbyters. Neither seek ye gratification in your own selfish judgment, but let there be in the same place, *one Form of prayer*, one topic of supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and joy reproachless. There is One Jesus Christ, who surpasseth all things: *together*, therefore, haste ye all, *as to one Temple of God*, *as to one Altar*, *as to one Jesus Christ*, who proceedeth from ONE FATHER, and is *in one* and *to one* is returned.” And after many other excellent words, he says:—

“Study therefore, to be confirmed in the doctrines of the Lord and of His Apostles, that in all you do, you may be prosperous in flesh and spirit, in faith and love, through the Son, the Father, and the Spirit, in

the beginning and in the end; *under your most excellent Bishop, and your Presbytery, a well twined spiritual garland, and the Deacons who are according to God. Be ye subject to the Bishop, and one to another, as Jesus Christ submitted Himself to His Father according to the flesh, and the Apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit, so that you may be united both in the flesh and in the Spirit.*" Bishop Lightfoot leaves out, *and to the Spirit*, because, though appearing in some copies, the words are left out in others. By a union of the flesh and of the spirit, a *visible union is urged*, one that can be seen by others, as well as one of inward affection.

Ignatius further witnesseth in his Epistle to the TRALLIANS concerning the points on which we are anxious to gain all the light and information we possible can, so as to settle us in the truth. But first, I would draw your attention to the manner of his salutation, as it seems to imply in some degree that he, even at this early period, possessed a Metropolitan or Patriarchal position, or what eventually led to it, for in addressing "the holy Church that is in Tralles, in Asia," he adds, "which I salute in the plenitude of my *Apostolic character.*" And this view is strengthened by the manner in which the Bishops and clergy of other Churches than that of Antioch regard him; and also from the style in which he writes to, and exhorts, the Churches in other places, than that wherein he was the Bishop.

In the substance of his Epistle to the Trallians,

however, there is something very pleasing and instructive respecting the matter under discussion, since Ignatius says:—

“For in that *ye are subject to your Bishop* as to Jesus Christ, you seem to me to be living not after the way of men, *but according to Jesus Christ*; Who died for your sakes, that by believing in His death ye may from death escape. It is, therefore, your bounden duty, as it is also your practice, to *do nothing apart from the Bishop*. *Be subject, moreover, to the Presbytery*, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope: may we be found to have had our conversation in Him! It is requisite, too, that they who are *Deacons* of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should be obliging to all men in every manner; for they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of God’s Church: they must therefore guard against reproach, as against fire.”

“Likewise, let all men give heed *to the Deacons*, as to an institution of Jesus Christ, and *to the Bishop*, as to the image of God: and *to the Presbyters*, as to the Council of God, and the Company of the Apostles. *Without these the name of the Church is not*. On which points I am persuaded that you hold with me; for I found, and retain with me, a specimen of your love, in the person of your Bishop, whose whole constitution of mind is an instructive lesson, and his meekness full of power.”

If there is one thing more than another which comes out more constantly to our view in these Epistles,

it is, you perceive, *the three-fold Order* of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Church: there is no other Order alluded to: and these three are moreover so mentioned as to appear a fixed part of the Constitution of the Church, so that no part of Christ's Church must be without them. These passages clearly confirm what has been before stated. And it again and again appears, as a standing ordinance in the Constitution that everywhere the Bishop is to be *the chief ruler* in the part of the Church assigned to him; where he is to be regarded as Christ's representative, to whom all due obedience and respect is to be paid. And it is further to be noticed, that the Deacons are spoken of as part of the sacred ministry, and not as holding a mere secular office, providing for meat and drink; any more than the Elders or Presbyters are spoken of as merely laymen; but all of those bearing these designations are, more or less, according to their several Orders, "accounted as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

And now let us see what we can learn more from this Epistle, as to the duty of the Primitive Christians as members of the Church. In another part of it, Ignatius continues:—

"I exhort you, therefore (yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ), to use only the Christian nourishment, and to abstain from the strange herb, which is heresy. For the heretics, receiving credit on the score of worldly reputation, invest Christianity with poison; offering as it were their fatal drug in a sop:

and he who knows it not, accepteth death with a ready and fatal welcome.

“From such men keep yourselves guarded. And guarded ye will be, if ye be not puffed up, nor separated from Jesus Christ our Lord, and from the Bishop, and from the *rules laid down by the Apostles*. He that is within the Altar*—is pure: he that is without, whoever namely, acts independently of the Bishop, the Presbytery, and the Deacons is a man of unclean conscience. I am not aware that there is ought of this kind in you, but for the love I bear you, I put you on your guard, foreseeing as I do the snares of the Devil.”

Now what is the duty urged upon the Trallian Church, and what is that which they are to guard against? It is that they shall seek instruction in Christianity through the appointed Ministers of Christ's Church, and resort to the means of grace as administered through them alone. And that they are to avoid those teachers, and, as true Christians, not to listen to their words, who assert their independence of the Bishops; much less seek grace through their hands: and this more especially are they to guard against, if these teachers are known to advocate any dangerous heresy, or openly oppose the Church; for instead of obtaining nourishment, they will but imbibe poison from the strange herb, or the heresy and error mingled with their teaching, which is sure to prove hurtful and dangerous to them.

*Bishop Lightfoot tells us that this expression “symbolizes the Congregation lawfully gathered together under its duly appointed officers.”

We are not to understand in the latter clause of the quotation, that any man by his merely adhering to the Church is thereby rendered pure, but that his doing so is a token of the sincerity of his Christianity; whereas he who rejects, or will not accept, the ministry of the Church, cannot be pure or sincere in his profession of Christianity: there is something sadly defective and wrong in it, though through prejudice he may not see it.

While at Smyrna, as we have said, Ignatius wrote to the Church at ROME. And it is very singular that in this Epistle there is no mention made of its Bishop, and no exhortation with regard to the three Orders of the ministry: and it might have been passed over without giving any references from it, had it not been that it, more than all the rest, shews the spirit of the man who wrote the other Epistles. In this Epistle Ignatius had a special object in view, which does not enter into the others. He was condemned to die at Rome, and his earnest request is that the Christians there will not move one step to set it aside, so willing and wholly ready, yea, and anxious is he to die for Christ's sake, and to testify to all that his faith in Christ is worth more to him than life, or all that the world can give. He says:—

“I write to the Churches, and I charge them all, that I die willingly for God, unless ye prevent me. I exhort you not to show me unseasonable kindness. Suffer me to be devoured by wild beasts, for by their means I am permitted to go to God. I am food for

God's service. Let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread unto Christ. Yea, encourage ye them, that they may be my grave, and may leave no part of my body; so that, when I am fallen asleep, I may burthen no man. Then shall I be a true disciple unto Christ, when the world seeth my mortal body no more: pray ye to Christ for me, that by their instrumentality, I may be found a sacrifice unto God."

Already he was bearing his cross after Christ, and being made like unto Him in suffering afflictions, for he endured much indignity and rough treatment by the way; besides having before his eyes constantly the terrible end that awaited him. And yet how humble and patient he was withal. He says:—

"Now am I learning, while in my bonds, not to set my affections on any thing that is worldly and fallacious. From Syria unto Rome I carry forward my sufferings, by land and sea, night and day; enchained to ten leopards; I mean the soldiers ranked around me: who by kindness are made harsher. But I take a lesson from their misdeeds: yet not herein am I made perfect. I long for the wild beasts that are prepared for me. . . . I claim of you to bear with me. I have discovered my true interest; I am just becoming a disciple. . . . Fire and cross, the assault of beasts, the rending of my bones, the laceration of my limbs, the crushing of my whole frame, dire tortures of Satan, let them come upon me, so that I but go to Christ."

He was one of those "appointed unto death," and had before his mind's eye all that at the last he would have to endure; but like his blessed Master, who, when the time came, "steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem," he was fully purposed in his heart to suffer for Christ. "I had rather die in Jesus Christ," he said, "than reign unto the end of the earth. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." But was there no shrinking back of the flesh; no turning aside from "the bitter cup"—no clinging still to this decaying life? Did not nature's feebleness wring from the aged man the prayer—"Spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen?" No—there was a certain distrust of himself, lest at the last he might give way; but in the strength of Christ he trusted to endure unto the end; and so his lofty faith triumphed over the pain and racking of body set before him. His courage rose to a nobler height as the day drew nigh. But mark the signs of his struggle, which show that he was no fanatic, but had the true martyr's spirit:—

"The Prince of this world desireth to tear away, and to corrupt the purpose that I have to God-ward. Let none of you who are at my side give him your help; adhere rather to my cause; it is the cause of God. . . If when I come among you, I claim of you to interfere to my preservation, yet listen not to me. Keep faith rather with the terms in which I now write to you. I live, but while I am writing to you,

I long to die. My affections are crucified. . . Pray for me that I may attain."

And yet there was another request that he asked of them: which shews the direction of his own prayers and thoughts full often; it was for the Church or flock over which he had for many years been Bishop:—

"Remember in your prayers the Church that is in Syria, which hath God for its Shepherd instead of me. Its only Bishop now will be Jesus Christ, and your love. I feel unworthy to bear the name of my flock. I am the last among them. I am 'one born out of due time.' But, by the mercy of God, I shall be of some small account, if I go unto him. My spirit saluteth you," &c.

The last words of the Epistle are an echo of his own soul: "Be strong unto the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ."

When Ignatius and the guard of soldiers had got as far as Troas, they here again tarried for awhile; and the saintly man took the opportunity of writing three more letters; one to his beloved friend and fellow Bishop *Polycarp*, another to the Church of Smyrna, by whom he had been so lovingly and courteously treated; and a third to the *Philadelphians*.

Ignatius was older than *POLYCARP*, and had been longer a Bishop, but the meeting together of these two devoted servants of Christ must have been very touching. They had known each other in former days, and for the last time on earth, they had once more beheld each other face to face, and had had

together many moments of hallowed intercourse, strengthening one another in God, and encouraging one the other to continue steadfast unto the end, each in his several course—to look forward to the crown of glory set before them, and their re-union again in Heaven, and in their Saviour's presence. "What hallowed recollections of the past," says one "must have come thronging back upon them—thoughts of the early friends who had already entered into rest—memories of days when together they sat at the feet of the last surviving Apostle, and learned those lessons of love for a fallen race, which since they had acted out in their long and toilsome ministry! Had they been faithful to the lofty trust which he bestowed upon them? And were they prepared for that dread account, which, fearful to any of our Lord's ministers, must be doubly so to those who are overseers of all? Solemnly, too, must the future have opened its vista before them, as these aged disciples of the Cross communed with each other." The remembrance of these sacred moments spent with Polycarp was sweet and cheering to the aged saint, on his way to martyrdom: and he now writes a few parting words to him.

"It was a welcome sight to find thy soul fixed on God as on an immoveable rock, for the which I glorify God the more exceedingly, that I have been counted worthy to behold thy sacred presence, praying that I may rejoice in it through God. I beseech thee, by the grace of God, wherewith thou art in-

vested, to press onward in thy course, and ever exhort all men so that they may be saved."

While with Polycarp, Ignatius had learnt to admire his work and character ; and yet he does not forbear giving him such godly counsel as would be most suitable to a Bishop ; and from which all other Bishops may learn much. The sentences are short, terse, and weighty :—

"Maintain thy station in all diligence, both of body and soul."

"Study to preserve that unity, than which nothing is better."

"Devote thyself to prayer without ceasing ; seek for more understanding than thou hast ; watch with an unwearied spirit."

"Speak unto every man, as God shall enable thee."

"Endure the infirmities of all men, as a good athlete : for where labour abounds, there the gain will abound."

"If thou love only the good disciples, what thanks hast thou ? Yea, rather endeavour, by thy gentleness, to bring the more mischievous into subjection."

"Every word is not treated with the same application ; but violent paroxysms are to be assuaged by emolient medicines."

"Be in all things, 'wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove.'"

"For this end art thou formed of flesh and spirit, that thou mayest soften the things that are visible to

thee : but pray that the things that are invisible may be revealed unto thee, that thou mayest want in nothing, but abound in every gift of God.

“Be temperate as God’s companion : the reward is incorruptible and Life Eternal ; in which also thy faith is firm.”

“Be not dismayed at those who seem worthy of trust, and yet teach new doctrines.”

“Stand firm, as the anvil under the stroke : for he is a mighty champion, who, though buffeted, yet overcometh.”

“But above all, for God’s sake, we must endure all, that He may also endure us.”

“Become more and more zealous : study the times : await him who is above all time, the Eternal, the Invisible (who yet for us men became visible) ; the Impalpable, the Impassable : who yet for our salvation became subject unto suffering, and endured all things.”

“Let not the widows be neglected, for thou under the Lord art their guardians.”

“Let nothing be done without thy sanction ; neither thyself do anything without the sanction of God.”

“Let your assemblies be held more frequently.”

“Seek out and address all by name.”

“Slight not the slaves, yet suffer them not to be puffed up.”

It is evident that Ignatius designed Polycarp to communicate the contents of his letter to the Church at Smyrna, and to those holding any ministerial office

there ; for there are a few words especially addressed to them. Thus he says :—

“Hearken unto your Bishop, that God also may hearken unto you. My soul is as the soul of them who are in subjection to their *Bishop*, their *Presbyters*, their *Deacons* : and may my portion be with them in the Lord ! Labour together, strive together, run together, suffer together, lie down together, rise up together, as the stewards, the ministers, and the servants of God.

“Let none of you be a deserter : let your Baptism remain, for it is your armour ; your faith, a helmet ; your love, a spear ; your long suffering, a coat of mail.

“Be patient with one another in mildness, as God is with you.”

Then it is important to notice how Ignatius bids Polycarp to summon a Council : and the object seems to be to elect another person to be Bishop in his place over the Church at Antioch. It is alluded to in another Epistle ; but here he says :—

“It is meet, O most blessed Polycarp, that thou shouldest call together a *holy Council*, and choose some one, well beloved and zealous, that he may be called God’s Messenger ; (the same term observe as was given to the Bishops of the seven Churches of Asia—*angel* :) and to appoint him to go to Syria, that he may make manifest your zealous love, to the glory of Christ.

“A Christian is not master of himself, but is devoted to God’s service. This work is God’s, and yours, when you have accomplished it.”

Ignatius intimates that he has to hasten his departure, and cannot write much more, but gives Polycarp further instructions what to do in this necessity; which helps us to gain a further insight into the mode of electing another Bishop, or Primate.

“Since I have not been able to write to all the Churches, because I have been suddenly called upon to sail from Troas to Neapolis, *do thou write* to those which are nearest to thee, knowing that God’s will is, *that they* shall do the same onwards, sending, if possible, messengers; if not, entrusting their Epistles to those whom thou shalt send.”

This seems, as a certain writer observes, to be a handing on of that “care of all the Churches,” that first St. Paul, then St. John, and afterwards Ignatius himself, had exercised by weight of inspiration, character, and experience, which made them Chief authorities over other Bishops. Polycarp is now intrusted with this charge. It was a presidency, that in time became attached to certain Sees, which were termed Patriarchates, of which Ignatius’ own Antioch is one; but at this time it belonged to men, rather than to places.

Among the salutations with which he closes his Epistle to Polycarp is this:—

“I salute him who shall be chosen to go into Syria; that the grace of God may be with him always in my prayer, through our God Jesus Christ.”

Before this, probably while at Troas, Ignatius had written to the members of the Church at SMYRNA also; and from the Epistle to them I select a few words

as confirming the evidence respecting the three Orders of the ministry, the difference of rank that existed, and the chief authority of the Bishop, which are the points mainly under discussion. He says, after many other exhortations :—

“Follow *your Bishop*, all of you, even as Jesus Christ the Father : and *the body of Presbyters*, as the Apostles. *Respect the Deacons*, as ye would the Commandments of God.

“*Let no one do anything pertaining to the Church without the Bishop.*”

“Let that be esteemed a well-ordered celebration of the Sacrament, which is administered either by the Bishop, or by those to whom he has committed it.”

“Where the Bishop is, there let the body of Believers be ; even as where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

Communion in the Church seems to be urged as a necessity for the perfect Christian life. And Bishop Lightfoot makes this comment upon the passage : Ignatius argues that the Bishop is the centre of each individual Church, as Jesus Christ is the centre of the Universal Church. Afterwards, the term “Catholic” obtained a technical meaning as opposed to heretical sects, but here its use is different. It is here the Universal or the whole Church, as opposed to parts, or to particular Churches.

Ignatius continues :—

“Without the Bishop it is lawful neither to Baptize, nor to celebrate the Communion ; but whatever he

judges right, that also is well-pleasing unto God, that all which is done be safe and firm.

“It is good to regard God and the Bishop. Whoso honoureth the Bishop, he is honoured of God. But he that doeth anything hidden from the Bishop, sheweth the Devil.”

It is pleasing to notice the endearing loving words of commendation he has for those at Smyrna, who had shewn much kindness to himself and others.

“May all things abound unto you in grace, for ye are worthy. In all things ye have refreshed me; even as Jesus Christ has refreshed you. Ye have loved me when I was present, and ye have loved me when I was absent. God reward ye therefore, for whom ye endure all things; wherefore also ye will attain unto Him!”

“Ye have done well, in that ye have received as the servants of Christ, even of God, Philo, Rheüs, and Agathopus, my followers in the Word of God: who also bless the Lord for you, because ye have in every way refreshed them. None of these things shall perish. My soul be as your souls; and my bonds, which ye despised not, neither were ashamed of; wherefore Jesus Christ, our perfect hope, will not be ashamed of you.”

And among the salutations, with which he closes this Epistle, are these words:—

‘I salute your holy *Bishop*, your most sacred *Presbytery*, and my fellow-servants the *Deacons*, individually and together in the name of Jesus Christ, in His Flesh

and Blood, His Passion and Resurrection, in *the unity of God, and of you*. Grace be with you, mercy, peace, and patience evermore. Farewell through the Spirit. . . Farewell in the grace of God."

There remains only one more of the Epistles of Ignatius to notice; it is to the PHILADELPHIANS. And there are two or three things to which attention must be first drawn.

Whilst waiting at Troas to embark for Europe, the position of affairs had somewhat altered since Ignatius had departed from Smyrna. Two persons had come to him at Troas, to see him once more, from the East, Philo, a Deacon of Cilicia, and Agathopus, a member of the Syrian Church, both of whom are mentioned in the letter *to* the Church at Smyrna. They had followed in his track, and halted at Philadelphia, and Smyrna. In both these places they had received a hearty welcome from the main body of the Church: but in the former place, some of the Judaizing opponents had treated them with contempt.

It should be remembered in the letter written by St. John to these same Philadelphians, some of them had been condemned, as those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;" and would shut the door against those who would not be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. (Rev. iii. 7-9.) And it would appear that the Church there was still troubled with such teachers; and this seems to be one of the reasons for Ignatius writing to them, since in the earlier part of his Epistle he is mainly occupied in controverting

this stubborn form of Judaism, which obviously still constituted the chief peril to the Christians in this city; for of this the messengers had complained.

But at the same time they had, respecting another matter, brought him joyful news. The prayers of the Church in many places had been answered. They told him that the persecution in his Church at Antioch had ceased: and he therefore urges the Philadelphians to congratulate the Church at Antioch, and assist them in the election of another Bishop, or Primate. These points will appear in the extracts, which shall be given; but other matters must be noticed in order with them, for in the opening address even, there are some words bearing upon the subject more especially in hand, for he begins:—

“Ignatius, which is also Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that is in Philadelphia . . . Even this Church do I salute in the Blood of Jesus Christ, which is our everlasting and abiding joy: especially if it be *in Unity with the Bishop and his fellow-Presbyters and Deacons*, appointed after the mind of Jesus Christ.”

Respecting the Bishop, he says:—

“This your Bishop, I well know, hath obtained his public Ministry, not of himself, or by means of men, neither out of vain-glory, but in the love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. His moderation I do greatly admire; as he by silence doth more prevail, than others with their idle disputations; for he is exactly fitted to the commandments, even as a harp to its strings.”

That is, he is set there as Bishop by the ordinance of Christ to keep all the several parts or officers and members in tune and order; and that he endeavours to carry on and carry out the Constitution of the Church as it had been settled by Christ and His Apostles. The next point that follows in natural order is this:—

“Do ye, then, being children of light and truth, *avoid division and corrupt doctrines*; but where *your shepherd* is, thither follow ye as sheep. For there be many wolves, that appear worthy of credit, who captivate by corrupt pleasure, those that are running a godly course: but *in your unity* they shall have no place.

“Abstain from those evil herbs, that Jesus Christ dresseth not; for as much as they are not of the Father’s planting. I say not this because I have found you divided, but rather sifted from evil. For all that are of God, and Jesus Christ, *these are with the Bishop*; and all that shall repent and turn *to the Unity of the Church*, *these also shall be of God, that they may live after the example of Jesus Christ*. Be not deceived, Brother; *whosoever followeth one that createth schism, he inheriteth not the Kingdom of God: whosoever walketh by another man’s opinion, he consenteth not to the Passion of Christ*.

“Endeavour therefore to use one and the same Eucharist; for there is but one Body of *our Lord Jesus Christ*; and one cup; *that His Blood may make us one*. *There is but one Altar*; also there is *one*

Bishop, together with the Presbytery and Deacons, my fellow-servants; that so whatsoever ye do, ye may do all according to the will of God."

The next thing to be noticed in this Epistle is the peculiar form of heresy alluded to above, which troubled the Church at Philadelphia, and caused dissension and division: and mark the directions which Ignatius gives respecting it:—

"Now, should any one expound Judaism unto you, hearken not unto him; for it is better to hear Christianity from a man that hath circumcision, than Judaism from one that is uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning JESUS CHRIST, they are unto me as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, whereon is nothing written but the names of men. Fly therefore, from the evil arts and snares of the Prince of the world: lest at any time, being oppressed by his devices, ye grow weak in love. *But join all of you together with an undivided heart.* I thank, my God that I enjoy a good conscience towards you, and that no one can profess either privately or publicly, that I have been burdensome to him in much or little; and I pray all among you to whom I have spoken, that they may not possess this as a testimony against me."

It is evident from what follows, that St. Ignatius had endeavoured aforetime, when he visited Philadelphia --as he does now by letter—to support the Bishop and other officers of the Church, and to promote Unity in the Church; for he continues:—

“Though some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit is not deceived, being of God; for it knoweth ‘whence it cometh and whither it goeth,’ and reproveth all the secrets of the heart. For while I tarried with you, I spake with a loud voice; ‘Give heed to the Bishop, to the Presbytery and the Deacons.’ Now some suspected that I spake things, as knowing beforehand that among them was a spirit of division. But He is my witness, for whom I am in bonds, that I knew it not from any living man; but the Spirit proclaimed, saying, ‘Keep your body as the Temple of God; love Unity; avoid divisions; be ye followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is a follower of His Father.’

“Wherefore I did my part, as *a man devoted to the preserving of Unity. For where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not.* The Lord therefore forgive all, when they repent, *if in repentance they turn to godly Unity, and the Council of the Bishop.* I have faith in the grace of Jesus Christ, that he will loose you from every bond: and I exhort you to *do nothing with contention, but according to the instructions of Christ.* And this I say; because I heard some affirm, that I have not faith in the Gospel, unless I find it written in the Ancient Scriptures; and when I told them it is so written; they answered, ‘Nay, it doth not so appear.’ But to me, Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient. My uncorrupted records are His Cross, and Death, and Resurrection, and the faith which is by Him; in the which I desire to be justified through your prayers.”

There seem to have been dissensions and divisions even then, as there are now; and some who would contend that these divisions and differences in faith, are not contrary to the Gospel; but St. Ignatius was fully satisfied that they were, and appealed to them to continue united in one body; and so fulfil Christ's will and design, and be such Christians as He would have them to be. For there is evidently a far greater blessing then, in the Unity of the Church, than ever men, in these degenerate days, dream of.

In the closing words of this Epistle to the Philadelphians, allusion is made to a matter already hinted at:— the end of the persecution of the Christians in Syria :—

“Now I am told that, through your prayer, and the hearts ye bear in Christ Jesus, the Church which is in Antioch of Syria, is in peace; it is fitting for you, as a Church of God, to elect a Deacon, to act as the ambassador of God for you; that so you may take part in their joy, *when they are met together*, and may glorify the name of God. Blessed in Jesus Christ is he, *who shall be* thought worthy of such a ministry; and ye also shall obtain glory. Now if ye be willing, it is not impossible to do this for the name of God: *seeing that all the neighbouring Churches have sent, in some cases, Bishops, in some Priests, and in others Deacons.*”

The method of electing a Bishop as a successor is probably alluded to, but more of this hereafter.

I will only add the closing salutation :—

“Fare ye well in Christ Jesus, our common Hope.”

The end of this martyred Saint is soon told. Landing at Neapolis, and bound with a chain to one of the soldiers ; they called at Philippi, and then seem to have taken the course that St. Paul did. When they came near to Rome, the Christians came out to meet St. Ignatius, and received him with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. Little time was allowed them for the interchange of sympathy and greetings ; the soldiers hurried their prisoner forward ; the games were nearly ended ; so they hastened on with him to the Colosseum at Rome : and then, being set alone in the midst of the amphitheatre, a spectacle to the assembled multitudes,—the hungry lions were at once let loose upon him ; and bounding upon him, they quickly dispatched him, and left nothing but a few of his bones which they could not devour.

It is said that the Deacons who kept him company to the last, gathered up the bones which the lions had spared, and returned home with nothing more, but the account of the sad story of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius. (Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I. 184-186, c. ref. The Library of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Bishop Lightfoot's Work ; and two other Translations.)

These letters make the Church of Christ appear to be instinct with life and order, love and unity ; like a well-ordered Kingdom, where the people live in loving obedience to those in authority ; and where there are various officers of different degrees in willing subjection to those above them.

But there is a special reason why more than ordinary consideration should be given to this kind of accumulative evidence. Not only because it is the witness of one who was going to die for his faith in Christ: and therefore that he would not be likely to say anything but what was perfectly true. Not only because it is the witness of one of the leading Bishops of his day; and therefore, was well qualified to speak of the state of things as they then existed in the Church. Not only because he had himself listened to several of the Apostles, and been brought up as a Christian, and ordained by them as a minister of the Gospel, and eventually to bear rule; and therefore, thoroughly knew their ways and purposes with regard to the Church—what was the Faith, Order, and Government of the Christians, which had been determined upon, and was to be handed down to future generations.

But, bearing all these points in mind, our special attention should be given to it, because of *the particular time* to which the evidence belongs. It was given at the most critical period of the Church's history; at a time when it is of the utmost moment to know more definitely and clearly what was the Order and Government that the Apostles settled for the Church by the direction of Christ. Allowing for the natural growth of the Church in its infancy, there are sufficient intimations of what its Order and Government was, to be found in the Scriptures themselves, but as some doubt has been thrown upon these matters, as a new interpretation has been given to certain passages, to

meet the views of those who are divided; it is a happy and providential circumstance, that we have such abundant evidence concerning the very points which have been disputed in these later days, in the authenticated writings and documents *immediately succeeding the Scripture records*; and within a few years, say six or seven, of the death of the last Apostle; and who had been Bishop in the Church for more than thirty years while St. John was living, the aged Apostle whose testimony upon the question, was sealed and stamped, as it appears to have been, with the authority of the Lord Jesus Himself.

It is a crucial period, and the evidence adduced sets at rest some very crucial questions. It clearly shews us what we have all along contended for, that Christ and His Apostles had not left the Church in an unsettled and in an unorganized state, so that the members or Pastors of the Church might anywhere and at any time, chose and set forth whatever scheme they liked or thought best for the age they lived in; which would lead to infinite confusion and separation. It clearly and distinctly shews us that the government of the Church was not democratic, that it was not left in the hands of people; the evidence plainly proves to us, that separate Congregations and their respective ministers were not independent of some authority over them; but that they must live according to the appointed order and canons of the Church, which were to be everywhere alike on all fundamental matters. This ample evidence clearly shows us also

that the government or ordering of the Church was not left in the hands of a combination of Presbyters anywhere, but in the hands of certain rulers—the Bishops, who, though having a certain independence in their own respective spheres, were a united body in themselves, and subject themselves also to the constitutional laws of the Church.

Thus the theories of Mosheim and his school, and in later days of Dr. Hatch and others, crumbles to pieces. For he must be very dense and dull of comprehension, who cannot perceive from such substantial and trustworthy evidence as has been set forth—nay, his prejudices must indeed be strong and obstinate, who can shut his eyes, and refuse to believe—that the Church of Christ had from the beginning one, and one only, definite kind of Church government, as left by the Apostles, through the command and instructions of Christ—well ordered, thoroughly understood, and most suitably adapted to the preservation of unity, in all parts, and at all times: and to which Christians of all ranks did then cleave, and were subject. And if we may judge, from a due consideration of the evidence, and the results which followed the working of that of which testimony is given, it was a highly organized Society, of a very powerful and influential character, where every one knew his position, and was taught his duty as a Christian, to be loyally and lovingly obedient to those who were over him in the Lord; so that its members were strongly and devotedly united together as one

people—one body in Christ—each of whom having been well instructed and trained; and filled with a holy ardour and love to Christ, endeavoured faithfully to do his duty, and keep to the body, with a thankful heart, for the great spiritual privileges and blessings which he enjoyed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE UNITY AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

AND onward from the time of St. Ignatius, there is a constant succession of witnesses to the Faith, Constitution, and Practice of the Church; so that the testimonies to these essential points go on increasing in volume, and should dispose all sincere lovers of the truth to receive their uniform evidence as to the government and unity of the Church without doubt and question.

Of course, at present we are all most concerned about the evidence of those that witness to these things in the Second Century, because it more directly than any other period follows on after the testimony of Scripture, and enables us the better to understand the things the Apostles taught, and the measures they adopted and handed on for maintaining the Church as one visible body. It is the period, too, as stated, in which the Canon of the Holy Scriptures—which we all loyally accept, and profess to be guided by—was evidently settled, and effected with great care and circumspection, as Eusebius testifies; for he mentions some of the books which were for a time questioned, and others which were rejected. And the witness of some of those who took part in this important business is of inestimable value. Besides, it is the

period about which there is so much discussion and dispute, and around and concerning which more particularly controversy waxes warm ; so that any further light, any well-assured evidence, must be very acceptable, to help those who are still in doubt, to make up their minds : for it is an unhappy state of things, and very hurtful, to both the individual, as well as to the large bodies of Christians, to go on in any uncertainty respecting those things of which we should be well-assured.

We, therefore, purpose to confine our evidence to the Second Century, and not to go further in the present work ; for the evidence afterwards becomes so abundant—that still keeping within the period defined as Primitive Christianity, and not going beyond the time of Constantine, or that of the Nicene Council—it would require another volume. For though the evidence continued to this latter time, is most valuable as supporting and corroborating the views set forth as to the right interpretation of the Scriptures, especially regarding the Church as founded by Christ and His Apostles ; we must put a limit somewhere, and we prefer to give the space at our command to the period nearest to the Scriptures, as more important, for the reasons above named, than any other.

The next Testimony, then, to St. Ignatius, is that of POLYCARP, who is another of the Apostolic Fathers, since, as Eusebius tells us, he was familiarly conversant with the Apostles, and *received the government of the Church of Smyrna* from those who had been eye-

witnesses and ministers of our Lord. (Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 36.) It is the same person with whom St. Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom, held sweet counsel, and spoke of "as truly an Apostolic man;" to whom he wrote as "the Bishop and Superintendent of the Church of Smyrna:" and of whom Irenæus, the famous Bishop of Lyons in France,—once a beloved pupil of his—writes in the succeeding generation, and narrates something that he had heard from his mouth: "When I was still a boy," he says, "in the lower Asia with Polycarp, and endeavouring by all means to gain his esteem; I remember the events of those times much better than those of more recent occurrence. As the studies of our youth growing with our minds, unite with it so firmly, that I can tell the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, his goings out and his comings in, his manner of life, and his personal appearance, his discourses which he gave to the people, and his description of his intercourse with John, and the rest of those who had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning His Miracles, His Doctrine, all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eye witnesses of the doctrine of salvation." (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 20.)

About forty years after the martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Polycarp was also put to death at Smyrna, among his own people, for confessing Christ. We are

much tempted to tell the grand story of his noble confession and glorious martyrdom, which makes his name stand out so prominently as a marked figure among the Primitive Christians, but we must forbear, in order to keep more closely to the discussion before us; and refer the reader to the long account given of it by Eusebius in Book iv. Chap. 15, of his Ecclesiastical History. Also the record of Polycarp, given in the previous chapter of Eusebius, respecting his going to Rome, as bearing upon his upholding the fellowship of the Church there; and disowning those who set up other communions, or taught heretical doctrine.

Polycarp did not write much; there is only one of his Epistles extant. Irenæus thus speaks of it: "There is, also, an excellent Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, from which those that wish, and they that have any concern for their salvation, may perceive both the character of his faith, and the doctrine of the truth." This Epistle is especially to be valued also, because it contains an entire endorsement of all that St. Ignatius had asserted. The letter begins, "*Polycarp and the Presbyters* that are with him to the Church of God which is at Philippi." It will be remembered that St. Ignatius on his way to martyrdom called at Philippi, and held communion for awhile with the saints there; and they had written afterwards to Polycarp desiring him to send him copies of St. Ignatius' Epistles: and this is what Polycarp says in answer to this request:—"The Epistles of St. Ignatius, which he wrote unto us, together with what others of

his have come into our hands, we have sent unto you, according to your order, which are subjoined to this Epistle; by which ye may be greatly profited, for they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the Lord Jesus. Send us word what you certainly know both concerning Ignatius himself, and his companions."

He further says, "Let the *Deacons* be unblameable before His righteous presence, as the ministers of God in Christ, and not of men; not accusers, not double-tongued, not covetous, but temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the Deacon or servant of all: of Whom, if we be careful to please Him in this world, we shall receive the reward of the other life, according as He has promised to raise us from the dead. . . . Let the *Presbyters* be tender and merciful, compassionate towards all, reducing those that are in error, visiting all those that are weak, not negligent of the widow and the orphan, and him that is poor, but ever providing what is honest in the sight of God and of men; abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgment, being far from covetousness, not hastily believing a report against any man, not rigid in judgment, knowing that we are all faulty, and obnoxious to punishment."

Then further on, he gives these sundry admonitions among others:—

"Be zealous of that which is good, *abstaining from offences and false brethren, and those who bear the*

name of the Lord in hyprocrisy, who seduce and deceive vain men.

“Leaving therefore the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to that doctrine, that from the beginning was delivered to us: let us be watchful in prayers, &c.

“I exhort you all, therefore, that ye be obedient to the word of righteousness, and that you exercise all manner of patience, as you have seen it set forth before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus and Rufus, but in others also among you, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the Apostles.”

Some parts of this Epistle which we have pointed out, read very much like portions of those written by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, giving directions as to the character and conduct of both the *Deacons* and *Presbyters*, which were ministering among them. And it is to be observed, how distinctly he speaks of the office of a Deacon, as one of *the sacred Orders* of the ministry, just as it is now regarded in the Church, and not as a secular office. Nor can we doubt that Polycarp believed Episcopacy to be a Divine Institution. Unless such had been his views, no earthly consideration would have induced him thus openly and decidedly to approve of what St. Ignatius had said respecting it, and the reception of the three Orders of the ministry as binding upon all real Christians.

After recording the martyrdom of Polycarp, Eusebius (Book iv. chap. 16) gives some account of another celebrated writer in the middle of the second century,

JUSTIN MARTYR, who also suffered for the faith of the Gospel. And we bring him forward as a witness; but first we must say something about the man, that it may be known who he is.

He was one of the ancient Philosophers, and had tested the various schools of philosophy before he became a Christian, to which he was converted, A.D. 133. It was the patient endurance of the Christians during persecution that led him to inquire into the truth of Christianity. He lived for some time in Rome; and published his Apologies in defence of Christianity. He had ample means of knowing the faith and practice adhered to; and he was highly regarded for his love of the truth, and his caution in not stating anything but what he was well assured of. St. Hippolytus speaks of him as one of the most esteemed teachers of the Church, and Eusebius attests the estimation in which his writings were held, as an authentic description of the Christian Church in those early days. His statement of facts, then, respecting Christian history and doctrine may be regarded as most trustworthy. He does not touch upon all points respecting the Faith and Constitution of the Church; but on some about which he speaks he is worthy of all attention.

In writing his First Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who began his reign A.D. 138, he speaks of Christian *Baptism* in Chapter 61, and says:—

“I will also relate the manner in which we dedicate ourselves to God, when made new through Christ; lest I omit this, I may appear unfair in my explana-

tion. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and affirm is true; and undertake to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and entreat God with fasting, for the remission of sins that are past; we praying and fasting with them. Then we bring them where there is water; and they are regenerated in the same manner as we ourselves also were regenerated. For in the name of God the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the washing of water. For Christ had said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mother's wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above, for he thus speaks; "Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow."

"And for so doing we have received from the Apostles this reason:—Since at our birth we were born without our knowledge and choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order, therefore, that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in water the remission of sins

formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe ; and calling Him by this name alone, we lead to the laver the person that is to be washed Now this washing is called *illumination*, because they who learn the meaning of these things are enlightened in their minds. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the Prophets foretold all these things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed."

In passing, it should be observed how distinctly the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is acknowledged and inculcated from the very earliest period of the Christian Church ; and the name of the Three Persons of the one Godhead used in the Sacrament of Baptism according to the direction of Christ our Lord. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) It should be noticed, also, that Baptism is of free choice in adults, after coming to the knowledge of the truth, and of their own sins, of which they repent ; and promising to lead a new life as becometh Christians. Then Justin Martyr shews how one Sacrament leads on to the other, in these words from Chapter 65 :—

"But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced, and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those that are called Brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves, and for the

baptized (illuminated) person, and for all others in every place, that we may be accounted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works to be found good citizens, and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the *President* of the Brethren, bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. and he taking them gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being accounted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying, Amen. This word 'Amen' answers in the Hebrew language to 'So be it.' And when the President has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us *Deacons*, give to each of those present a portion of the eucharistic bread and wine mixed with water; and carry a portion of them to those who are absent."

Here, not only may we notice that two different orders of ministers are distinctly alluded to, but that the Communion in both kinds are clearly administered to the Laity; nor is there any right or authority in the Church of Christ to deprive them of the cup, or by so doing, to mutilate this Holy Sacrament.

In the next Chapter (66) this author observes:—"This food is called among us *Εὐχαριστία* (the

Eucharist), of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these ; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour—having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation—so likewise we have been taught *that the food* which is blessed by prayer according to His Word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, *is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus, Who was made flesh.* For the Apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have these delivered unto us, what was enjoined upon them ; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks said, ‘This do in remembrance of Me, this is my Body :’ and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said : “This is my Blood ;’ and gave it to them alone.”

Asking for a careful consideration of the above words, we would briefly notice what Justin Martyr says upon Public Worship and the observance of Sunday. (Chap. 67.)

“And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And those of us that have the means assist those who are in want : and we always keep together : and for all things wherewith we are supplied we bless the Maker for all things, through His Son

Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost." "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities, or in the country, gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read to us as long as we have time. Then the reader concludes; and the President verbally instructs, and exhorts us to the imitation of the things that are excellent. Then we all rise together and pray."—And as has been said before, the Eucharist is then administered. A collection is then made, and placed in the hands of the President, "who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or from other causes, are in want," &c.; concluding with these words:—"But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in darkness and matter, made the world: and Jesus Christ our Saviour rose on the same day from the dead. For he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His Apostles and Disciples, He taught them these things, which we have given to you also for your consideration." This ends the witness we produce from Justin Martyr.

Our next testimony is from ST. IRENÆUS. He was, as we have seen, a pupil of the blessed Polycarp, who had been intimate with the Apostles; and he forms one of the main connecting links between the Apostolic Fathers, and those who are more distinctly called the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church. Irenæus

was at first a Presbyter under "the blessed Pothinus, who had faithfully performed the ministration of the *Episcopate* at Lyons." Eusebius gives us an account of the Confession and Martyrdom of this worthy saint. (Eccl. Hist. v. 1.) Afterwards none was found more worthy than Irenæus to fill the vacant See. He also in his turn suffered martyrdom after enduring many torments, rather than deny Christ; together with a large number of Christians during a severe persecution under Severus, so that the streets of the city are said "to have flowed with the blood of Christians." This took place A.D. 202, or at the furthest A.D. 208; so that the greater portion of Irenæus's *Episcopate* was exercised in the second century. He was born A.D. 140: but some say twenty and even thirty years earlier. And on account of his zeal and learning was soon accounted as "the light of the Western Church."

The following is his account of the Faith of Christians, and how the Church everywhere witnessed to the great Truths of the Gospel. In it we find the very germ of the Apostles' Creed:—

"The Church, although extended through the whole world, even unto the ends of the earth, has received *from the Apostles and their Disciples* the belief in *One God*, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation: and in the Holy Ghost, who by the Prophets proclaimed the merciful dispensation, and the coming, and the Birth from a Virgin, and the Passion, and

the Resurrection, and the Ascension into Heaven in our flesh, of the Beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and His appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father, to gather together all things in one, and to raise from the dead all flesh of human kind."

And after speaking of His coming to judgment, and how He will then recompense the wicked and the faithful; Irenæus continues:—

"This is the message, and this the Faith, which the Church has received; and which, though dispersed throughout the whole world, she sedulously guards, as *though she dwelt but in one place; believes as uniformly as though she had but one soul and the same heart: and preaches, teaches, and hands down to posterity, as harmoniously as though she had but one mouth.* True it is the world's languages are various, but the power of the Tradition is one and the same. There is no difference of Faith or Tradition, Rule, or kind of Government, whether in the Churches of Germany, or in Spain, or in Gaul, or in the East, or in Egypt, or in Africa, or in the more central parts of the world; but as the sun, God's creature, *is one and the same in all the world*, so also the preaching of the Truth shineth everywhere, and lighteth every one who will come to the knowledge of the Truth. Among the Rulers of the Church, neither he who is powerful in words speaks other doctrine (for no one can be above his Master), nor does the weak in the Word diminish the Tradition. For, whereas *the Faith is one and the same*, neither he who has much to say concerning it,

hath anything over, nor he who speaketh little any lack."

Besides, his testimony with regard to the Constitution of the Church is very clear and instructive. As an argument against heretics, and those who had set up communions of Christians independent of Church authority, he unfolds the charter of commission by which the Bishops of his day act, and exact obedience; and bids those who had set up separate communions to give in like manner a proof of *their* authority, if they can.

"We can reckon up," says Irenæus, "those whom the Apostles ordained to be *Bishops in the several Churches*; and *who they were that succeeded them, down to our times* For the Apostles desired to have those in all things perfect and unreprouable *whom they left to be their successors, and to whom they committed their own Apostolic authority.* We have the succession of Bishops, to whom the Apostolic Church in every place was committed. All these (that is, the heretics) are much later *than the Bishops, to whom the Apostles did deliver the Churches.*" (Adv. Hæres iii. c. 4.)

"The true knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles, and the *ancient state of the Church throughout the whole world, and the character of the Body of Christ, according to the succession of Bishops to whom they committed the Church that is in every place, and which has descended even unto us.*" (Ibid iv. c. 6.)

Can anything be more expressive or definite as to the government of the Church, and through what

means its authority is to be authenticated and established ! And it is by the same rule as the Church had in the Second Century, and by the same commission, that the Church of England now acts, and propounds to us as a test whereby we may ascertain which is the orthodox communion, and who are rightly called to act as ministers of Christ's Church. For in the XXIIIrd Article of Religion, it is stated that "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who have public authority *given unto them* in the Congregation, to *call and send ministers* into the Lord's Vineyard."

It was during the lifetime of Irenæus that POLYCRATES, Bishop of Ephesus—where we know there were several Presbyters—in another part of the world, wrote a letter to Victor, Bishop of Rome, at the request of several Bishops assembled together, to confer about the time of keeping Easter, appealing to the tradition of former Bishops and Martyrs in confirmation of the practice they held to. Among others he mentions Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna ; Thraseus, Bishop of Eumenia and Martyr also ; Sagaris, Bishop of Laodicea and martyr also ; seven Bishops of his own kindred, and a great multitude of other Bishops, who assembled to consult him about the time to observe Easter. "Who," he says, "seeing my slender body,

consented to the Epistle, well knowing that I did not bear my grey hairs for nought, but that I did at all times regulate my life in the Lord Jesus." Hence we learn, not only that there were a vast number of Bishops bearing rule over Presbyters and Deacons and the Laity in their several respective spheres, but that they held Synods or Councils among themselves to decide upon matters of importance, and come to some agreement among themselves. (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 24.)

The testimony of HEGESIPPUS, the earliest Ecclesiastical Historian, who flourished about the same time as Irenæus (A.D. 160-180), but in a different part of the world, strikingly substantiates what he said about the government of the Church by Bishops. For Eusebius tells us, that he travelled through a great part of the world, and conversed with many *Bishops*, on purpose to learn what they had severally received as left by the Apostles ; and, "that *he received the same doctrine from all.*"

Further on, Hegesippus says :—"And the Church of Corinth continued in the true faith until Primus was *Bishop* there After coming to Rome, I made my stay with Anicetus, whose *Deacon* was Eleutherus. After Anicetus, Soter succeeded, and after him Eleutherus. In *every succession*, however, and in *every city*, the doctrine prevails according to what is declared by the law and the Prophets of the Lord."

That is, he *everywhere* found the *same doctrine* held, and the *same Constitution* and *succession* of Bishops, in the Church prevailing. But there is still more

important testimony given by Hegesippus, which bears directly upon the point in question, and is most interesting, since it relates to the Mother Church at Jerusalem ; and shows also that for a long time she was comparatively free from heresy and schism, but that after awhile how troubles multiplied upon her. For, in treating of the heresies that arose about his time, he says:—

“But after James the Just had suffered martyrdom, (as our Lord had for the same reason,) Simeon, the son of Cleophas, our Lord’s uncle, was appointed *the second Bishop, whom all proposed* as the cousin of our Lord. Hence they called the Church as yet a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. *The but this made a beginning secretly to corrupt it, on account of his not being made Bishop.* He was one of those seven sects among the Jewish people. Of these, also, was Simeon, from whom sprung the sect of Simonians ; also Cleobius, from whom came the Cleobians ; also Dosithius, the founder of the Dositheans. From these also sprang the Gorthæonians, from Gortæus, and the Masbothians, from Masbotheus. Hence also the Menandrians, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and the Saturnalians, *everyone introducing his own peculiar opinions, one differing from the other.* From these sprang the false Christs, and false prophets, and false apostles, *who divided the unity of the Church,* by the introduction of corrupt doctrines against God and against His Christ.” (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. 22.)

And here I had better introduce or weave into this testimony what Eusebius, who wrote about 160

years after Hegesippus, says about the successor to James the Just; observing this difference in the accounts: Hegesippus wrote about what happened in his days, and of what was truly certified: Eusebius must take the account of what he gives of what then happened from others; and he intimates as much: but inasmuch as we find that he can generally be depended upon in other matters which he relates, we may reasonably allow that what he here relates, he surely believed to be true. Moreover, it seems to tally with what Hegesippus says.

Eusebius tells us that “after the martyrdom of James, and the capture of Jerusalem, which immediately followed, *that those of the Apostles and the Disciples of our Lord, that were yet surviving, came together from all parts with those that were related to our Lord according to the flesh.* For the greater part of them were yet living. *These consulted together, to determine whom it was proper to pronounce worthy of being the successor of James. They all unanimously declared Simeon, the son of Cleophas, of whom mention is made in the sacred volume, as worthy of the Episcopal seat there.* They say he was the cousin german of our Saviour, for Hegesippus asserts that Cleophas was the brother of Joseph.” (Euseb. Hist. III. 11.)

And now we may add what Eusebius says *upon the authority of* Hegesippus, about the death of this Simeon, for the testimony is of such value, that it is desirable to gather together all that is said respecting this *Bishop*.

“After Nero and Domitian, we have also been informed, that in the reign of the Emperor whose times we are now recording, there was a partial persecution existing throughout the cities, in consequence of a popular insurrection. In this we have understood, also, that Simeon died as a martyr, who, we have shown, was *appointed the second Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem*. To this the same Hegesippus bears testimony, whose words we have already so often quoted. This author, speaking of certain heretics, superadds, that Simeon indeed, about this time, having borne the accusation of Christian, although he was tortured for several days, and astonished both the Judge and his attendants in the highest degree, terminated his life with sufferings like those of our Lord. But it is best to hear the writer himself, who gives the account as follows:—‘Some of these heretics,’ says he, ‘accused Simeon of being a descendant of David, and of being a Christian; and thus he suffered as a martyr when he was an hundred and twenty years old, in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and the presidency of the Consular Atticus.’ The same author says, ‘that as search was made for the Jews that were of the tribe of David, his accusers, as if they were descended from this family, were taken into custody. One might reasonably assert that this Simeon *was among the witnesses that bore testimony to what they had both heard and seen of our Lord*, if we may judge of the length of his life, and the fact that the Gospels make mention of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, whose son Simeon was, as we have already shown.’ ”

“The same author (Hegesippus) relating the events of the times, also says that the Church continued until then as a pure and uncorrupt virgin ; while if there were any at all that attempted to pervert *the sound doctrine of the saving Gospel*, they were yet sculking in dark retreats ; but when *the sacred choir of the Apostles* became extinct (intimating that there was harmony in the voices and instructions of the Apostles, and they all spake the same things) ; and *the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom* had passed away, then also the combinations of impious errors arose, by the fraud and delusion of false teachers. These also, as there was none of the Apostles left, henceforth attempted, without shame, to preach their false doctrine against the Gospel Truth. Such is the statement of Hegesippus.” (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. 32.)

The able G. Hickes, the non-juror divine, observes, that if the installation of St. James into the Episcopal chair at Jerusalem be a demonstration of the Apostolic Institution of Bishops, as I have shown some time before ; the promotion of Simeon to that See, after the death of St. James, is a good evidence of their intention to have it continued in the Christian Church ; since they themselves appointed him Bishop to succeed his predecessor. It is a remarkable fact, worthy of particular notice, as ushering in *the method* of filling up a vacant See in the times of the Apostles, giving their sanction to it. Nay, more, ordering it as an ordinance in the Church when by reason of death another

Bishop is wanted—so that it might become a precedent after their death, for those who followed them to go by ; and which we learn was fully and faithfully acted upon by them.

Two things are to be noticed ; first, one who held not this position — one of the other two Orders—was selected to succeed James as *Bishop*, and to rule the Church at Jerusalem in his place ; and to whom the Elders and Deacons as well as the Laity should be subservient ; for to imagine that there was no other pastor in the Church at Jerusalem than the Bishop, is what no man in his common senses would affirm, or has ever been affirmed by any. There was one chosen by the Apostles and disciples or kinsmen of our Lord, from among the Clergy, and raised to the rank or dignity of a Bishop of that See, and as such he is ordained by them. Neither the Church at Jerusalem, as a body, nor the Presbyters and Deacons as already officers among them, had power to appoint or ordain a Bishop for themselves. For if they had, why should the Apostles still living, preaching the Gospel in different parts, be called together ; in short, be assembled as a Council for this end, to elect and consecrate Simeon as Bishop of Jerusalem.

Again, if James the Just had governed the Church at Jerusalem, and none other after him, it might have been said, that the Office of Bishop in the sense in which it is now understood, was to terminate ; that the honour had been conferred upon him on account of his peculiar excellence ; and not from the necessity

for such a ruler, or because it had been ordained that there should in every place be such rulers in the Church. This account of Simeon shews that the office which James the Just held was to pass on to posterity, and be held by others after him. This was decreed by the Apostles themselves that remained. Simeon succeeds James in all his rights, prerogatives, and authority. And Simeon was thus admitted and installed to this office as chief ruler by the same Apostolic body, who, at the first, had instituted James the Just; and by the same power, so probably in the same manner, and with the same formalities, as he was.

Moreover, as Simeon held the office of Bishop for forty-three years till his death, it is an evident sign that Episcopacy was an office for life, and not a primacy of Order or presidency, which might at any time be changed; or ended by other ministers in that particular Church. It was a permanent dignity or Order, with which a man was invested by those who had a right to confer it. This fact is as clear as the light; and all Ecclesiastical History seems to confirm it.

But the evidence that should place the question, between the existence of the Episcopacy, and any other form of Church government, beyond any doubt or dispute, is the fact that CATALOGUES OF THE BISHOPS were preserved in all the Churches from the very time of the Apostles, and the name of the first Bishop appointed by them in each respective Church at the

head of the others. So that no time could be pointed to as intervening since the beginning of Christianity, when the Church of Christ was not under the entire rule of the Episcopacy, or when it did not exist. No Church can be singled out in which any other rule existed than the Episcopacy. Some sects arose in which other forms of government prevailed, but they were not recognised as belonging to the Church. Nay, so essential was the Episcopacy considered, that a few of those who separated from the Church, sought by some underhand means to get the Episcopacy among them, to establish their credit with the Christians.

Let us continue the catalogue of Bishops in the mother Church of Jerusalem. Eusebius gives the names of those who succeeded Simeon, in regular order; and continues them up to his own time. If it had been fictitious, or if it had been made up out of his own head, there were other writers that would have readily contradicted the statement; and we should have heard something about its being untrue. But no such thing is mentioned or alluded to; the fact was so patent to every one in his day that it could not be denied. It was known at Jerusalem; it was known to Christians in other places that there had always been a succession of Bishops in that Church kept *up* from the times of the Apostles. The Bishops in other Churches as well were scrupulously careful of this: it was a matter of consequence with them to trace up their authority *to the Apostles*, and through them to Christ, their Divine Head and Master. And

that no man might doubt his fidelity regarding what he says, Eusebius positively declares that he gathered that catalogue out of the records of the ancients; though he could not find in all cases the exact time or duration of their Episcopacy; but the succession of rulers in that Church had evidently been kept up to his day.

Eusebius, in Book III., chapter 35, thus writes:—"Simeon also having died in the manner, above shown, a certain Jew named Justus succeeded him in the *Episcopate at Jerusalem*; as there were great numbers from the circumcision that came over to the Christian faith at that time, of whom Justus was one." In another place (Book IV., c. 5), he states: "We have not ascertained in any way that the time," alluded to above, "of the Bishops in Jerusalem have been regularly preserved on record, for tradition says that they all lived but a very short time. So much, however, have I learned from writers, that down to the invasion of the Jews under Hadrian (A.D. 135—138) there were fifteen successions of Bishops in that Church, all which, they say, were Hebrews from the first, and received the knowledge of Christ pure and unadulterated; so that in the estimation of those who were able to judge, they were well approved, and worthy of the *Episcopal office*. For at that time the whole Church under them consisted of faithful Hebrews, who continued from the times of the Apostles, until the siege that then took place. The Jews then again revolting from the Romans, were subdued and captured, after very severe conflicts.

“In the meantime, as the Bishops from the circumcision failed, it may be necessary now to recount them in order from the first. First, then, was James, called the brother of our Lord ; after whom the second was called Simeon, the third Justus, the fourth Zacheus, the fifth Tobias, the sixth Benjamin, the seventh John, the eighth Matthew, the ninth Philip, the tenth Seneca, the eleventh Justus, the twelfth Levi, the thirteenth Ephres, the fourteenth Joseph, the fifteenth Judas. These are all the Bishops of Jerusalem *that filled up the time from the Apostles.*”

Hadrian then planted a colony of Romans at Jerusalem : and, as Eusebius says in the next chapter, “when the Church of the Gentiles was collected there, the first Bishop after those of the Circumcision was Marcus.” We pass on now to Book V., c. 12, of his Ecclesiastical History, where we learn something more. “At this time also (still within the two hundred years), Narcissus, who is celebrated among many even to this day, was noted as Bishop of Jerusalem, being the *fifteenth in succession since the invasion of the Jews under Hadrian.* Since this event we have shown that the Church there consisted of Gentiles after those of the Circumcision, and that Marcus was the first Bishop of the Gentiles who presided there. After him Cassinus held the Episcopal office ; after him followed Publius, then Maximus ; these were followed by Julian, then Caius ; after him Symmachus, and another Caius ; and then another Julian, who was followed by Capito, and Naleus, and Dolichianus. Last of all Narcissus, *thirtieth in regular succession from the Apostles.*”

Further on, in Book VI., c. 10 and 11, we have some interesting accounts of this Narcissus, in which we perceive how the Bishops were clothed with the authority of their office. "Narcissus having retired from the world, and no one knowing whither he had gone, *it seemed proper to the neighbouring Bishops to proceed to the ordination of another Bishop.*" The individual to be made Bishop might be chosen by the people of the Diocese, or sometimes by the Clergy as well, or sometimes afterwards it was in the hands of the temporal ruler. But none of these had the power to give anyone authority to use the office of a Bishop: it remained with the Bishops of his Province—the neighbouring Bishops; who would only proceed to the consecration when they approved of the person elected, as suitable and fitted for the sacred office. For this power of giving authority to rule in the Church was invested in the hands of the Apostles by Christ; and then through them in the hands of those who were appointed to rule in their places; and none others. They often advised with those most interested in the election, and at times recommended to them the individual most likely: for in general they sought for the consent of the Clergy and Laity, as the persons much concerned in the new Bishop. Being a post of great danger, few were eager to accept the office, and it was generally assigned to the most devoted of the priests that could be found.

Narcissus had been in great peril of his life; and as our blessed Saviour had said, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another,' he had thought it better to withdraw. The name of the individual chosen to succeed

him was Dius ; “ who, after presiding over the Church for a short time, was succeeded by Germanis, and he by Gordius ; in whose times, Narcissus appearing again, as one raised from the dead, was entreated by the Brethren to undertake the Episcopate again ; all admiring him still more, both for his retired life, and his philosophy, and above all on account of the punishment inflicted by God on his slanderers.” (B. VI., c. 10.)

On account of his extreme age, however, he was now no longer able to perform the duties of his office. But when a vacancy occurred, the “ Bishop of another Church,” named Alexander, “ was called to the office at the same time with Narcissus.” This, it is believed, is the first instance of a translation of a Bishop to another See. The Church at Jerusalem considered that by some sign the Bishop Alexander had been “ pointed out to them by God.” But however they traced the hand of Providence in this, all was done—the reinstatement of Narcissus, the translation of Alexander from one See to another, and the associating of the two together as colleagues—“ with the common consent of the Bishops of the neighbouring Churches.” In a letter written by Alexander, which had been preserved, some allusion is made to this arrangement ; for, in concluding the letter to another Church, he adds, “ Narcissus salutes you, the same who before me held the Episcopate here, and is now colleague with me in prayer, being now advanced to his hundred and tenth year, and who with me exhorts you to be of one mind.” Observe in passing, how the Church in

one place, is still very anxious that the Christians, in another place should live in unity among themselves.

This same Alexander also writing to the Church of Antioch respecting the consecration of another Bishop to that See, shewing the interest he takes in another leading Church, says : "Alexander, a servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, sends greeting in the Lord, to the blessed Church at Antioch in the Lord. The Lord hath made my bonds easy and light during the time of my imprisonment, since I have ascertained, that by Divine providence, Asclepiades, who in regard to his faith is most happily qualified, has undertaken the trust of the *Episcopate of your holy Church*." This same Epistle, as Eusebius points out, intimates, was carried by one Clement, who is thus spoken of : "This Epistle, my Brethren, I have sent to you by Clement, the blessed *Presbyter*, a man endued with all virtue, and well approved, whom ye already know : who also coming hither, by the providence and superintendence of the Lord, has confirmed and increased the Church of God." (B. vi. c. 11.) It is probable that Clement was a messenger of the Church of Antioch, sent to announce the fact of the New Bishop's Consecration to the Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, and to ask for his approval of the appointment, as seems to have been the custom.

The Church is much indebted to Eusebius, for he was a great collector of facts, and the records of all the most important events and transactions in the Church, both previous to his time, and during his life-

time, and what he considered to be authentic he put down in his books. And well it is that he did this, for nearly all the ancient writings or documents then in existence are destroyed, and we should have been left in ignorance of many things which are now of great moment, if it had not been for him. Thus they are valuable, as the circumstances and transactions which he records not unfrequently form precedents for the Church in other times and places, to go by. As in the Nicene Council, when the Fathers said, "Let the ancient customs prevail." We here learn from Eusebius what they were in many particulars. And as they came to a decision as to what was the right faith, or right view of any doctrine, when new and perverse views were advanced, by asking the several Churches how they had received the Faith from the beginning, so Eusebius tells us how careful they all were to prevent the teaching of false and corrupt doctrines; and how zealous in resisting the introduction of new and unauthorised ways and customs.

As Eusebius has given us a catalogue of the Bishops of Jerusalem, so he has of ANTIOCH also, the next great Church that was founded; for it preceded that of Rome by many years. The one was founded at the beginning of St. Paul's ministry, the other towards the close of it. The names of the succession in this Church are recorded in the order of time, and mixed up with many other particulars, so that they are to be gathered out of the history in various places. I will, however, here give them in order for the first two

hundred years, shewing the several links of the chain, which were obtained from the archives of that Church; and the references to them in Eusebius, so that any one who cares may trace out *the succession from the Apostles*. Euodias was the first in the Catalogue, Ignatius, the second (B. iii. c. 22); Heron, the third (iii. 36); Cornelius, the fourth; Eros, the fifth; Theophilus, the sixth (iv. 20); Maximus, the seventh (iv. 24); Sarapion, the eighth (v. 22); and Asclepiades, the ninth (vi. 11); concerning whom, Alexander of Jerusalem wrote as above. The Catalogue could be carried down to the eighteenth Bishop, who was contemporary with Eusebius, but we purposely do not extend it beyond the two hundred years after Christ's death.

In giving the names of this succession of Bishops in the Church of Antioch, two or three things narrated in the history should be noticed. In speaking of three of them, Eusebius specially describes their appointment, as being the sixth, seventh, and eighth "*in succession from the Apostles*," so as to assure his readers, of the legitimacy of their authority in the Church as derived from the Apostles themselves. In speaking of Theophilus, the sixth, he mentions that this Bishop wrote "three books containing the elements of the Faith," and another with the title, "Against the heresy of Hermogenis;" "besides certain other Catechetical works." And continues, "As the heretics no less then, than any other time, were like tares destroying the pure seed of the Apostolical doctrines, the Pastors of the Churches everywhere hastened to restrain them (the heretical teachers)

as wild beasts from the fold of Christ. Sometimes they did it by their exhortations and admonitions to the Brethren; sometimes more openly contending with the heretics themselves, by oral discussions and regulations; and then again by confuting their opinions, by the most rigid proofs in their written works. Theophilus, therefore, with others, also contended against these, as is manifest from a work of no mean character, written by him against Marcion, which together with others that we have mentioned, is still preserved.” (iv. 24.)

Concerning Serapion, the eighth, Eusebius tells us: “it is probable that he left many monuments of his application to learning, which are preserved by others: but only those that are addressed to Domninus have come down to us. Domninus was one of those that had fallen away from the faith, at the time of the persecution, and relapsed into Jewish superstition. There is also another work composed by him ‘On the Gospel of Peter,’ as it is called, which indeed he wrote to refute the false assertions which it contains, on account of some in the Church of Rhosse, who by this work were led away to perverted doctrines. From which it may be well to add some brief extracts that it may be seen what he thought of the book:—

“‘We Brethren,’ says he, ‘receive Peter and the other Apostles as Christ Himself. But those writings which *falsely* go under their name, as we are well acquainted with them, we reject; and know also, that we have not received such handed down to us.

But when I came to you, I had supposed that all held the true faith: as I had not perused the Gospel presented by them under the name of Peter, I said, 'If this be the only thing that creates difference among you, let it be read;' but now having understood, from what was said to me, that their minds were enveloped in some heresy, I will make haste to come to you again: therefore, Brethren, expect me soon. But as we perceive what was the heresy of Marcianus, we plainly saw that he ignorantly contradicted himself, which things you may learn from what has been written to you. For we have borrowed this Gospel from others who have studied it, that is, from the successors of those who led the way before him, whom we call Docetæ (for most opinions have sprung from this sect). And in this we have discovered many things, superadded to the sound faith of our Saviour; some also attached that are foreign to it, and which also we have subjoined for your sake.'" (Eccl. Hist. vi. 12.)

Thus, in those early days did many of the Bishops "contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints." (R.V.) Thus did the Church in primitive times prove herself to be "a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ;" thus did her Bishops distinguish between spurious books and those that were genuine; and guard the Church against having any of the former introduced into the canon of Scripture, however high sounding their title; as well as guard the Christians from being imposed upon, by heretical

and unauthorized teachers, in strictly preserving the succession of Rulers in the Church, who being united in one body and all teaching the same thing, endeavoured to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

And now we proceed to give a catalogue of the Bishops of Rome, in succession from the Apostles; a Church, if we may judge from what is written, that was first founded by St. Paul, and not by St. Peter. For it is clear from St. Paul's Epistle to the Roman Christians, that no other Apostle had, as yet, been among them. St. Paul says; "So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ is named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." (xv. 20.) And then, "But now having no more place in these parts," where he had hitherto preached, "and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain I will come unto you And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." (verses 23, 24, and 29.) And we know from the closing Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, that St. Paul did go, or rather was brought to Rome, without the mention of any other Apostle having been there before him; and that he "dwelt there two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (xxviii. 30, 31.)

As was usual with the Apostles, they did not appoint a Bishop to succeed them, or have rule over any Church,

so long as they could look after it in some measure themselves; and it was only when it became likely, that they could not much longer do this, that they appointed a successor to rule the Church with full authority from themselves. In the Apostolical Canons, as you may remember, it was decreed that "a Bishop must be consecrated by two or three Bishops;" and something of the same order seems to have been followed by the Apostles themselves; as it is evident from the accounts given, relative to the first Bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth, as Eusebius intimates; and there is every reason to believe that the same course was adopted at Rome also; and that the first Bishop was not consecrated by St. Peter alone. It was very desirable that there should not be any division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and the very appearance of any distinction would be done away with by the chief Apostles, both of the Jews and the Gentiles, uniting together in this appointment, as having equal authority in the same body.

Although, eventually, the Church of Rome wanted to set up an ascendancy over other Churches, and therefore claimed for their Bishops authority from St. Peter alone, as the chief of the Apostles; yet, if we are to receive the weight of evidence in the early history of the Church before the Council of Nice, it is not in favour of St. Peter alone, but of St. Paul as well, and that they both acted as representatives of the Apostolic body; which of itself implies that it was not from St. Peter alone that the Bishops of Rome received their authority, but from the united body of the Apostles, to which even St. Peter himself was

subject. If St. Peter had claimed sole dominion or authority in this matter, it is probable that St. Paul would have again "withstood him to the face," as at Antioch; for as he had regard to the foundations laid by the Apostles as a body corporate, he was not the man to allow even the chiefest Apostle to usurp authority over his own province without a contest. But both Apostles were now nearing their latter end, and with death in view we may rightly believe that they were perfectly at one in the Consecration of the first Bishop for Rome, and performed it jointly. And this is most in accord with the authentic records of the early Church. For both are spoken of as having been united in this sacred work; but more frequently, as in other Churches, the Bishops of Rome are said to have derived their authority *in succession from the Apostles*.

Who was the consecrator on these occasions—whether the Apostle of the Circumcision, or the Apostle of the Gentiles, in whose jurisdiction Rome appeared to be, and who was the first Apostle that ordained ministers, there—we have no certain record; but it is a singular fact, worthy of note, that both the first and third Bishops of Rome, Linus and Clement, are both mentioned in Scripture as connected with St. Paul's ministry, and were his fellow helpers. See 2 Timothy iv. 21., and Phil. iv. 3.

We shall now bring together those passages from Eusebius which enable us to trace the Bishops of Rome from the Apostles for two hundred years; and we could continue the list further to Eusebius's time if

needed. In the Fifth Book of his Ecclesiastical History, Chapter VI., Eusebius, speaking of the Bishops of Rome, says : “ *The blessed Apostles having founded and established the Church*, transmitted the office of the *Episcopate* to Linus. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in his Epistle to Timothy. He was succeeded by Anacletus, and after him Clement held *the Episcopate, the third from the Apostles*. Who, as he had seen the blessed Apostles, and had been connected with them, might be said to have *the doctrine of the Apostles sounding in his ears, and what they delivered before his eyes*. And not only he, but many others were still left, who had been taught by the Apostles.

“In the time of this Clement, there was no little dissension amongst the Brethren at Corinth, on occasion of which the Church of Rome wrote a considerable Epistle to the Corinthians, confirming them in peace, and renewing their faith and the doctrine they had lately received from the Apostles.” The writer from whom Eusebius quotes these words, is the celebrated Irenæus, who after the martyrdom of Pothinus, “succeeded him in the Episcopate of the Church at Lyons.” “This writer,” he says, “has inserted the succession of the Bishops in his third book against the heresies, where he reviews the catalogue down to Eleutherus.” Then Eusebius tells us, after a little, that this writer subjoins these words : — “But this Clement was succeeded by Evarestus, and Evarestus by Alexander. Nystus followed as *the sixth from the Apostles* ; after whom was Telesphorus, who also illus-

triously suffered martyrdom ; then came Hyginus, and after him Pius. He was followed by Anicetus, and he was succeeded by Soter ; *the twelfth from the Apostles in the Episcopate* now is Eleutherus, in the same order, and the same doctrine (or *succession* as Valesius renders the word), *in which the tradition of the Apostles in the Church and the promulgation of the truth has descended to us.*" (Book v. chap. 6.)

In another place Eusebius notes that, "In the tenth year of the reign of Commodus, Eleutherus, who had held the Episcopate for thirteen years, was succeeded by Victor." (V. 22.) Further on still, after speaking of a work written by this Victor, he adds, "But after this author had superintended the Church, Zephyrinus was appointed his successor about the ninth year of Severus." Eusebius carries down the Catalogue to Marcellinus, the twenty-eighth Bishop of Rome from the Apostles. (VII. 32.) But without following him thus far, we would in passing allude to transactions which happened in the Episcopate of two of these Bishops, viz., Anicetus and Victor.

First, while "Anicetus was at the head of the Roman Church, Irenæus says that Polycarp was still living, and coming to Rome, had a conference with Anicetus, on a question respecting the day of the passover And Polycarp was a man who had been instructed by the Apostles, and had familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, and had *also been appointed Bishop by the Apostles*, in the Church at Smyrna, whom we also have seen in our youth,

for he lived a long time, and to a very advanced age."

"He always taught what he had *learned from the Apostles, what the Church had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine.* All the Churches bear witness to these things, and those that have been the successors of Polycarp, to the present time—a witness of the truth much more worthy of credit, and much more certain than either Valentine or Marcion, or the rest of those perverse teachers. The same Polycarp coming to Rome under the *Episcopate* of Anicetus, turned many from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming the one and only true Faith *that he had received from the Apostles, that, viz., which was delivered by the Church.*" (Euseb. iv. 14.)

These are important points, which should be well weighed over; since he was a witness to those living in the middle of the second century, as to the truth, and the right government and Constitution of the Church, as settled upon by, and handed down from the Apostles. His testimony was a most important link in assuring not only the Churches of Asia, but the Church of Rome, and other Western Churches, of the exact truth, and the exact order or rule, which the Apostles established, and propagated in all nations. None was better qualified to certify to these things, since not only his knowledge but his authority had been derived from the Apostles themselves, by whom he had been taught, and from whom he had learnt all necessary things. The coming of Polycarp seems

to have been a great help and advantage to the Church of Rome; and from what follows Anicetus not only greatly esteemed him, but valued the privilege of conversing with this Apostolic man, and being assured of the main truths, and ways of the Church.

There was one thing especially in which they differed, and that was about the time of keeping Easter: for the time in the Asiatic Churches was different from that of the Western Churches. But as we learn, this difference did not interrupt their communion, or, at that time, disturb the unity of the Church. For, as Irenæus states, "When the blessed Polycarp went to Rome, in the time of Anicetus, and they had a little difference between themselves likewise, respecting other matters, they immediately were reconciled, not disputing much with one another on this head. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it, because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles with whom he was associated: and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe, who said that he was bound to maintain the practice of the Presbyters before him. Which things being so, they communed with each other: and in the Church, *Anicetus yielded to Polycarp* the office of consecrating, out of respect, no doubt; and they separated from each other in peace, all the Church being at peace; both those that observed and those that did not observe, maintain peace." (Euseb. v. 24)

Now, it may be observed, in passing, that the keeping of Easter at the same time in all Churches, afterwards became a great bone of contention; but in those early days, each Church was allowed to keep its own custom, without interrupting the intercourse or communion with each other; and so left the matter until the Church could come to some agreement about it hereafter. Hence one mode of observance was not to be forced upon any other Church without the general consent and agreement. Moreover, it may be noticed that the Bishop of Rome did not claim the supremacy, or dictate to Polycarp what he must do; he had *then* no such authority as his successors claim to have. We find these two Bishops treating as equals; if anything Anicetus cedes to Polycarp the superior position.

This controversy about the keeping of Easter broke out again in the time of VICTOR, the thirteenth Bishop of Rome from the Apostles. Rome being the capital of the world, its Church had grown in importance; it remained sound in the Faith, and was charitable to those in need, so that those coming to Rome from various parts frequently consulted its Bishop, and asked for his support. Hence the Bishop of Rome began to dictate and assume authority over other Churches. And when the Churches of Asia, with Polycrates at their head, would not observe Easter at the time they did at Rome, Victor threatened to excommunicate them; but many leading Bishops did not support him in this arbitrary proceeding; even those who observed Easter as did the Roman Church. Among these was the noted

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons and Primate of France, who duly admonished Victor, and condemned his conduct, showing that the various Churches had different customs, not only in this, but in other matters; "and yet with all these maintained peace, and we have maintained peace with one another; and the very difference in our fasting establishes the unanimity in our Faith:" and refers to the example of Polycarp and Anicetus, before mentioned, as an instance of the manner in which Churches and their Bishops should behave towards one another.

"And," continues Eusebius, "This same Irenæus, as one whose character answered well to his name, being in this way a peace-maker, exhorted and negotiated such matters as these for the peace of the Churches; and not only to Victor, but likewise to most of the other rulers of the Churches, he sent letters of exhortation on the agitated question." (B. v., c. 24.)

It is important to, observe then, that when the Bishop of Rome began to dictate to other Churches, and threaten them, other Bishops of leading Churches did not agree with him, and reproved him as acting rashly; so that Victor felt compelled to withdraw his excommunication, and be at peace with those who differed from him; which shows that the Bishops of Rome at this time also were not considered to have a supremacy over the other Churches beyond his own jurisdiction; for if he had been acknowledged as supreme, would not the other Churches have supported his authority, and would any have dared to rebuke him?

And again, if the Church of Rome had possessed the supremacy that is claimed for it, would there not have been some acknowledgment of it by other leading Churches, and some demonstration that it existed and was allowed ?

This and other transactions show that the leading Churches were independent of each other ; and that even the majority had no power to bind the minority. Polycrates still considered himself quite the equal to Victor, and still held his opinion, and continued the custom of his Church. And yet it is clear all through, that the Churches acted in concert with each other, and continued in communion with one another as a united body, though extended throughout all the world. Differences might exist in what was not regarded as essential, but it was not to interrupt their communion, much less for one Church to proceed to excommunicate another, because it would not follow another custom or usage.

In like manner we can from Eusebius trace up the Catalogue of Bishops in the Church of Alexandria, beginning from St. Mark the Apostle, up to his own time. Nor are these instances to be regarded as exceptional ; since we have further intimation that other Churches in like manner kept a list of Bishops from the beginning : but, as Irenæus says, "it would be very tedious to enumerate the succession in all Churches." (III., c. 3, sec. 2.)

Now, in summing up this part of our subject, we would ask, What can be more conclusive from all

that has been adduced, than that there was but one kind of Government in the Church of Christ during the second century? And what more evidence can be needed, to prove satisfactorily to all reasonable thinking men, than that this kind of government was undoubtedly Episcopal? And who cannot perceive and understand that by the strict maintainance of this form of ecclesiastical rule, a solid basis of unity was kept up in the Church, throughout all the world, not only in having the same Faith, but in having the same order and agreement maintained between the several branches of it? Who cannot but see, also, that this order and rule is not of mere human origin, but is Divine; and can be traced up to the Apostles, and through them to Christ the true Head and Founder of the Church, who designed it, and brought about the institution of it, for the very purpose, that His believing people *might be one*?

If any one is still unconvinced of this basis of unity having been thus established from the beginning; after considering the lengthened inquiry, this continual reference to authenticated facts, and the undoubted statements of well known accredited writers in the Primitive Church, and the legitimate deduction of their words; I shall almost despair of his ever coming to an agreement with it; since it would seem that, from some preconceived views and prejudices, there is a determination, a wilful resistance, not to admit an appeal to the truth, unless it can be made to fall in with his notions of it.

But I would further ask of such individuals, What well authenticated proofs can you bring in behalf of the system you support—of the views you conceive to be right? I suppose you do not think that reasonable men will take your word for it; you must be able to bring forth substantial evidence to establish what you say, in behalf of what you advance.

And as far as this extended Inquiry has been made, there appear to be no dependable traces, no certain evidence *of any other system* than that of Episcopal government: for not only do the Scriptures give clear intimations of it, but proofs from the earliest writers after these Scriptures were written, during the whole of the Second Century, are so abundant that there is no room for any other system. It is shewn that disunity of the Church of Christ would have prevailed had there been any other: and that it was solely by the upholding of that which was considered to be, and was received by all the Churches, as Apostolic and Divine that unity was so largely maintained. So that those who attempt to prove the existence of any other system, set themselves a most difficult, and, I may say, impossible task to accomplish, which must only end in utter failure. For if it could be proved that other systems existed in the early Church, or were *ever* designed to exist in the Church of Christ, it would, from the nature of the case, overthrow any sure basis for the unity of Christians, as Christ so earnestly desired.

The endeavour in this Inquiry has been to express the mind of the Church in her best and purest days,

and the views held by some of the most eminent and learned Divines in the Church of England, who have given much attention to the subject, and speak out with no uncertain words. You have heard what Hooker said, hear now what Bishop Jeremy Taylor states:—
“In divine commandments, and in the appointed ministries of grace, the Apostles were but the mouth of Christ, and ministers of His Holy Spirit; and in those things, what they told to the Churches *is our law for ever*. Of this nature is the distinction of Bishops from Presbyters, and the Government of the Church by them; for this being done in the Apostles’ times, and immediately received by all Churches, who everywhere, and ever since, were governed by Bishops, and by Presbyters under them, it is not only still to be retained unalterably, and is one of those great things in which the present Churches have no liberty or authority to make a change; but *it is to be concluded to be a law of Christ*, which the Apostles did convey, *with an intent to oblige all Christendom*. . . . For this was a ministry of grace; the Bishops were for ever appointed to give a gift by the laying on of hands; and, therefore, here was an appointment by Christ and by Christ’s Spirit; for there is not in the world a greater presumption than that any should think to convey a gift of God, unless by God he be appointed to do it. Here, then, could be no variety and no liberty; this canon Apostolic *is of eternal obligation*, and the Churches cannot otherwise be continued.”
(Ductor Dubit., p. 626, fol. edit.)

In concluding the whole of this Inquiry, let me say, that I consider it of the utmost moment that this question be thoroughly looked into and sifted: for nothing so much stands in the way of Christians being truly united in One Body in Christ Jesus, as the pernicious notion that various systems of the Christian religion existed at the first, and were allowed: or that it was ever intended by Christ and His Apostles that they should exist in the Church. Some of those who are still separated from the historic Church of Christ, and are yet yearning honestly for this great and Divine Unity among Christians, come very near to some agreement; and it seems only to be a question which resolves itself into the testimony of history, supporting and carrying out the truth of Holy Scripture.

This is apparent from the reply of the General Conference of the Congregational Churches, held in America, in answer to the Bishops in 1886, which we recall to mind, in which they heartily agree with them as to the terms of communion, except in the question of "the Historic Episcopacy," for they are far from a conviction of its Scriptural derivation. (See Vol. I. pp. 124, 125.) The Presbyterians of New York also, speaking out more plainly, say, they recognise "Historic Episcopacy," *but* assume they were Presbyterians. (See Vol. I. pp. 125, 126.) But in answer to this, we ask, Where is your proof? Can the few references you give be depended upon by reasonable thinking men? Instance also the statement in England, made by the Chairman of the Congregational Union,

held in London, 1886 (and who afterwards was called upon to address the assembled ministers of the Baptist Union, showing that he was a man of some note); for when speaking of the longing desire for unity there was among them, he gave utterance to these expressive words:—"But *that general Union can be attained only through a common return to the Ecclesiastical life of the first two Centuries.*" (See Vol. I. p. 113.) And what this really was, I have attempted to show, as the outcome of Scripture, and the teaching and customs of the Apostles as received by the Primitive Christians.

Again, I say, it will not do to single out a few passages of Scripture of doubtful interpretation, and bend them to a meaning they were never designed to convey; nor to trust to uncertain allusion in Ecclesiastical History which fail to establish views they were never intended to do.

For neither on the one hand, can we accept as true a system which is not in keeping with Scripture, or the Apostolic Church: and has undoubtedly corrupted both the Faith and the Constitution of the Church as initiated by the Apostles; and was built upon the unwarrantable assumption of a Supremacy, by intrigue, interpolation of history and the works of the Fathers, by the use of forged documents and fraud, and by the power of the fire and sword, and torture as the the Apostacy of Mahommedanism was: for, if true, what need of these abhorrent and immoral practices? Nor on the other hand, can we put trust in any

other system which is unable to bring forward substantial proofs to support it from Scripture, or the authenticated history of the first two centuries; and for many centuries after.

No! we as reasonable and accountable men, take our stand upon, and abide by the system of Church government that rests upon the broad, plain, unmistakable, and abundant testimony of the Holy Scriptures, honestly interpreted, as settled by the Apostles of Christ by His command; as received and acted upon, and witnessed to, by the Primitive Christians, of which there is ample authentic evidence.

Whether this great yearning for the Unity of Christians, now, unhappily separated, will ever lead to organic union, *i.e.*, of one body joining another, is still doubtful. The Lord may have some better way of bringing His believing people together in one body. But what will certainly incline Christians of all denominations eventually to take their stand on the Scriptural basis of true Christian unity—upon the foundation of the Apostles—will be the making a sincere and unbiased *inquiry* for themselves into the truth of Scripture, and the testimony of early Church History, bearing upon the points in dispute. The spread of more accurate information, the enlarging the view of our horizon, to gain a more extended survey, and the diffusion of light and knowledge, will have a wonderful influence upon all Christians, and will do more than anything else to bring them together, to be of one heart, and of one mind—to become one general united body in

Christ their Lord, as He so earnestly prayed they might.

In this INQUIRY, I have endeavoured to bring out more clearly to light, what I honestly believe to be God's revealed will and God's plan, for the unity of Christians, as far as can be effected consistently with man's free will ; and that there must necessarily, from the nature of things, be only one way or means of securing it. There will be many that will differ from me. Some there are who cannot bear to hear the truth when it is not just according to their preconceived views, and puts them in the wrong, and will not only reject, but will even scorn and ridicule what has been contended for. Still there are others, who are in some perplexity about the unity of Christians ; and knowing that it is the Will of the Lord, are anxious to look more closely into the question. They are not offended at the plain out-spoken truth. And while thankful for more light, they will diligently and with all readiness of mind, inquire into it for themselves, both in the ancient records of Christianity, and in the Word of God, to see whether these things be so or not ; like the Bereans of old, who were more noble than those in Thessalonica. And some will rejoice to find that there is a Scriptural solution to the difficult question.

For though I may have written strongly, and as plainly and convincingly as I could in behalf of what I sincerely regard to be God's truth, and God's purpose relative to the question, I have done it in love ;

having in my heart a great reverence and esteem for many of those who may differ from me, both among the Roman Catholics and the Nonconformists ; since their lives bear testimony without doubt to the great love they have for the dear and Divine Lord, who died for us all, and show no little devotion to Him and His service ; and who, I am persuaded, are really anxious to be guided aright in this matter ; very desirous to obey Christ's holy will ; yes, and even at some cost to themselves, will give up their own will and way for the Truth's sake, when they are convinced that it requires this of them, in fulfilling Christ's design.

It is not so much against the members of other communities, wherein much sterling piety is to be found, that I have spoken out, but against those systems which have caused, and still cause, such havoc, estrangement, and division, among Christians—which prevent, and will for ever prevent, any greater attainment of true Christian Unity—which seem so contrary to the Scriptures, and stand so much in the way of the accomplishment of our Divine Lord's holy Will and purpose regarding His believing people.

To one and all of us, “ Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the *old paths*, where is the good way, and walk therein : and ye shall find rest for your souls.” And let no one say, on *any* account, like the foolish and perverse Jews of old, “ We will not walk therein.” We refuse to take any other

way than our own, and what seems right in our own eyes.

May God, of His infinite mercy, give us all grace, "seriously to lay to heart the great danger we are in by our unhappy divisions;" that He will "take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord; that as there is but *one Body*, and *one Spirit*, and *one hope* of our calling, *one Lord*, *one Faith*, *one Baptism*, *one God and Father of us all*, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity; and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN."

INDEX.

- Adelaide*, the Bishop of, on unity, i. 127.
African, South, Church, on unity, i. 81 ; the Synod of, 127.
Agreement in many things, i. 83.
Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, expostulates with Arius, i. 255 ; would not receive Arius, 258.
— Bishop of Constantinople, resists the admission of Arius, i. 288.
— Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 457.
Alva, Duke of, ii. 35.
Ambrose, St., imposing penance on the Emperor, i. 181.
Ambition, the, of the Papacy the cause of schism, i. 396.
Ambitious men hinder unity, ii. 71.
American Christians desire unity, i. 81 ; Church Convention (1886), 118–124.
Anicetus and Polycarp, ii. 467.
Antioch, the Bishop of, restrained by the Council of Ephesus, i. 234 ; the Church of, ii. 221 ; first called Christians at, 226.
Angel, the, of the Church at Ephesus, ii. 354 ; at Smyrna, 356 ; discipline exercised by, 357.
Angels, the, of the Churches, ii. 349, 353 ; the Presbyterian idea of, 355 ; the pre-eminence of, 356.
Anecdote of Dr. Woolf, being sent to preach, ii. 185.
Anhalt, Prince George of, on Bishops, ii. 14.
Anselm and the Pope, i. 402.
Apollinarian heresy, i. 302.
Apollonius, ii. 215.
Apostolical Canons, the, i. 221–248, ii. 382 ; Beveridge on, i. 224 ; Bunsen on, i. 225 ; instances given of, 225–228 ; some earlier than others, 230 ; acted upon, 233 ; Bishop Pearson on, 225 ; prove that the Church had a constitution, 235 ; the Church of England confirmed by, 236 ; indicate a basis of unity, 238 ; referred to by Constantine, 269 ; Canon LXIV. founded on Christ's injunction, ii. 158.
Apostolic Days, unity in, i. 136.
— *Fathers, the*, ii. 379, 383.
— *Order* confirmed at the Council of Nice, i. 268.
Apostle, St. Paul made an, by Divine command, ii. 262.
Apostles, the, the first Bishops of the Church, i. 215 ; had separate spheres of labour, which led to the Diocesan system, 216 ; were ordained by Christ, ii. 124 ; trial made of, in Christ's ministry, 126 ; the Twelve, all equal in power and dignity, 141, 145, 202 ; agreement among, 159 ; the first delegation of a perpetual ministry to, 162 ; are not to begin the Church till the Holy Ghost comes, 189 ; the order in which, are to preach, 192 ; the authority of, i. 216, ii. 142, 149, 245 ; a united order in themselves, ii. 203 ; joint Governors in the Church, 213–216 ; twelve years at Jerusalem, 215 ; send forth St. Peter and St. John as their representatives, 217 ; St. Peter accountable to, 219 ; how the government of the Church in Jerusalem was to be carried on after the departure of the Twelve, 250 ; others, in addition to the Twelve, 254 ; James made the first Bishop of Jerusalem, 252, 256 ; all, conform to one rule or system, 259 ; St. Paul independent of the Twelve, 262 ; St. Paul acknowledged by, 265 ; and of the same body which, had founded, 265 ; settle differences between Jews and Gentiles, 316.
Appeals to Rome, anciently not allowed, i. 382 ; against the Canons of the Church, 385.
Arius, an account of, i. 254 ; excommunicated, 256, 264 ; afterwards favoured by Constantine, 284 ; his awful death, 289.
Armada, the, and Philip of Spain, ii. 27.
Articles of Religion, the XXVII., i. 165 ; the XXXIV., 418 ; the XIV., ii. 49.
— the Six, in favour of the Popish views, i. 408.
Articulus Cleri, on Church communion, i. 99.
Association, the, for the unity of Christendom, i. 84.
Athanasius, St., at the Council of Nice, i. 263, 210 ; made Bishop of Alexandria, 285 ; withstands the readmission of Arius, 285 ; banished by Constantine.

- Athanasius, St.*—continued.
whom he confronts, 286; the frequent dangers of, 290; lives to see the Nicene Faith established, 291; the creed of, 360.
- Augsburg Confession*, the, ii. 8; and the Reformation in England, 9, 11; on Baptism, 11; on the Eucharist, 11; on Church Government, 14; on Bishops, 14.
- unity desired at the diet of, 46, 48; abuses rejected at the diet of, 48.
- Augustine, St.*, Bishop of Hippo, on Baptism, i. 70; the great champion against Pelagianism, 299; against the Donatists, 302; on Bishops, ii. 260.
- the Missionary to England, i. 337; meets the British Bishops, 339.
- Australia*, the Church of, on unity, i. 81; the Synod of, 126.
- Authority* for discipline received from Christ, i. 190, ii. 286.
- St. Paul's exercise of, ii. 278–286.
- Awakened desire* for unity, i. 81.
- Bangor*, the monastery of, destroyed, i. 342.
- Baptism*, admission to the Church by, i. 165; probation for, 167; not to be repeated, 170–172; Augsburg Confession on, ii. 11; our union with Christ, through, 106; the commission for, intrusted to the Apostles alone, 163; the administration of, not given to all Christians, 165; of infants, 234; account of, by Justin Martyr, 246.
- Barnabas* joined with St. Paul, ii. 302, 315, 318.
- Bartholomew's Day*, the massacre in France on St., i. 395.
- Basis, the*, of Unity, to be sought for, i. 37; revealed in the Scriptures, 47, 78; ordained by Christ and His Apostles, 72; found in Christians adhering to one body, 78; a general acceptance of, 326–363; designed by Christ, ii. 194; visibly manifested in the Church at Jerusalem, 246; St. Paul joins and upholds, 265–276; the last Scripture witness to, 374.
- Becket*, Thomas à, and the independency of the English Church, i. 403.
- Bede*, i. 349, 355.
- Belgic*, the, Confession, ii. 52.
- Beveridge*, Bishop, on the Apostolical Canons, i. 224.
- Beza*, on Bishops, ii. 16, 61; against Bishops subject to the Papacy, 63.
- Bible, the*, and the Bible only, our authority, i. 60, ii. 246; interpreted by Primitive Christians, i. 60; has a definite meaning, 61; not responsible for heresies and schisms, 62; in Henry VIII. reign, 409; and the Church of Rome, ii. 4.
- Bishops* must adhere to the Faith and Canons of the Church, i. 210; the Apostles the first, 215; the Apostolical Canons on the consecration of, 225; must not interfere in other Dioceses, 227; can be summoned by Bishops, 228; must be unanimous, 231; could be deposed for ordaining in the diocese of another, 265; the British, and Augustine, 339; the British succession of, continued, 342; the government of, allowed by German Reformers, ii. 14; Beza on, 16; Foreign, under the Papacy, 21; the, and Luther, 51; a college of, in every province, 259; the succession of, 260; of the Western Church, except Rome, reject the Seventh General Council, i. 390; have a charge over the whole Church, 434; St. Cyprian on the unity of the, i. 435; Timothy and Titus made, ii. 323–334; called Angels, 349, 353, 370; upheld by Christ, 372; method of electing, 424; account of the succession of, by Irenæus, 444; by Hegesippus, 446; G. Hickes on the succession of, 451; the succession of, traced up to the Apostles in each Church, 453, 455, 460, 464–467; the succession of, kept up by the neighbouring Bishops, 416, 424, 456; two of the early Roman, connected with St. Paul's ministry, ii. 465.
- Bohemians*, slaughtered by the Papists, i. 395.
- Bonner*, the deception of Bishop, ii. 59.
- Bowden*, on Angels (Bishops), ii. 69.
- Brotherhood*, the Church a great, i. 165.
- Bucer*, Martin, ii. 10.
- Building the Church*, Christ had a design for, ii. 94, 96; Christ gives all necessary instructions for, 97–101; St. Paul's metaphor for unity in, 275.
- Bull*, Bishop, on the Augsburg Confession, ii. 9.
- Bullinger* and Calvin desire to have Episcopacy, ii. 57.
- Bunsen* on the Apostolical Canons, i. 225.
- Butler*, Bishop, on the visibility of the Church, ii. 209.
- Cajetan*, Cardinal, ii. 39.
- Calvin*, on the Eucharist, ii. 12; on Church government, 15; refuses the Eucharist to dissentients, 23, 25; Hooker on, 23; the discipline of, 24; desires to have Episcopacy, 57, 61, 62; deceived by the Papists, 59; against Bishops subject to the Pope, 62.
- Campion*, the Jesuit, in England, ii. 30.
- Canons* of the Church, observed, i. 209.
- Apostolical, i. 221–246; needful for unity, 224.
- the Three of Nice, 264–267.

Canterbury, the rule of the Archbishop of, i. 379.
Casaubon, on Bishops having a universal charge, i. 434.
Catalogue, a, of Bishops from the Apostles, ii. 452; in the Church of Jerusalem, 453-457; of Antioch, 459; of Rome, 463-467; of Alexandria, and other Churches, 472.
Catechumens in the early Church, i. 166; different classes of, and mode of trying them, 168-170.
Catholic, the Church of Rome ceased to be, i. 371.
Catholic the, Church, i. 371; opposed to the Papacy, 378; Pope Honorius cast out of, 380; safety in the old, 392; never sanctioned the corruptions of the Papacy, 394; the Papacy tyrannized over, 394.
Celibacy of the Clergy, not enforced at the Council of Nice, i. 271.
Chad, St., deposed, i. 344; restored with honour, 351.
Chalcedon, Council of, guided by the Apostolical Canons, 234; called together, 309.
Change of Life in Primitive Christians, i. 146, 149.
Charlemagne, i. 389, 390.
Charles V., of Germany, joins the Papists, ii. 50.
Chichester Diocese formed, i. 352.
Christ, loyalty to, should insure unity, i. 197, 205; the sole Head of the Church, 211; the divinity of, affirmed at the Council of Nice, 263; in other General Councils, 310; to honour, like to the Father, 296; will and design of, respecting the Church, ii. 88-196; erroneous conjectures about the design of, 90; the *a priori* argument in favour of a design by, 92; made known His design amid great difficulties, 97; banded His disciples together, and promised them His Holy Spirit, 100; argument for a design from the words and actions of, 102; the Church of, the kingdom of Heaven, 102; explains the nature, beginning, and growth of the Church, 104; the care of, for His Church, 107; a plan in the teaching and proceedings of, 113; preparations of, for building His Church, 114-139; the ministry of, 118; gathers disciples gradually, 119; began to preach, 121; the first missionary tour of, 121; the Twelve named Apostles by, 124; the second year of the ministry of, 124; the second missionary tour of, 126; a third missionary tour ordered by, 126; then appoints another body of ministers—the Seventy, 128; a three-fold order in the ministry of, 133-137; gives special directions to the Twelve, 139; the Church of, safe amidst dangers, 139; gives authority

Christ—continued.

to the Twelve, 142; makes the Twelve equal, 146-149; is alone for ever supreme, 154; on discipline, 156; promises to support His ministers, 159; makes His final arrangements, 161; commits the administration of the Sacraments, and the authority for preaching to the Apostles alone, 161-171; the consecration of the Apostles to succeed, 172; the perpetuation of the ministry designed by, 174; the principle of succession in the ministry shown by, 175-189; gives the Apostles some particular directions, 189-193; during the 40 days speaks about His Church, 193; ample proofs of the design of, 194; the presence of, with His Church, 222; the only living Head, 225; confirms Episcopal rule in the Church, 346-349; the sovereignty of, in the Church, 360; the intimate knowledge of, as to the state of each Church, 364; holds Bishops specially responsible, 366.

Christianity, the early growth of, i. 157.

Christians have much in common, i. 37; extermination of, determined upon, 241; take the Scriptures as their rule, 38; the primitive, under persecution, 145; changed in their lives, 146; living by the Scriptures, 149; noticed by Justin Martyr, 153; noticed by Tertullian, 153, 157; cared for and watched over, 174.

Christian Teachers, should be well-informed, ii. 86.

Chrysostom, St., on persuading men, i. 177.

Church, the, the basis of unity in, i. 56; the building of, witnessed to in Holy Scripture, 72; before the New Testament Scriptures, 73; reponsible to Christ for her unity, 107; a Brotherhood, 165; a constitution of, framed by the Apostles, 216; everywhere must abide by her faith and constitution, 210; allied to the Empire, 245; early government of, 318; the confession of Augsburg on, ii. 14; Calvin on, 15; wrong impressions about the, and its early government, 73-86; called the Kingdom of Heaven, 102; gradually appears, 198; a visible body, 206; likened to the natural body, 267.

— *of England*, viewed by a leading Dissenter, i. 114; her early revenues, 354, 356; abhors the adoration of images from the first, 390; independent of Rome, 401-407; terms of communion in, 408; the Reformation of, 408-416; what it had to endure before the Reformation, 399; reformed from within herself, 410.

— *the Gallican*, against the adoration of images, 389; limits the Pope's supremacy, ii. 37.

- Churches*, many, ravaged by the Goths, &c., i. 297; the independency of National, ii. 46, 49; the seven, of Asia, ii. 346; the seven, contrasted with South of England, 352.
- Clement of Alexandria*, ii. 215.
- of Rome on unity, 384; on the Episcopate, 388.
- Clergy*, the, discouraged by divisions, i. 13; to care for the baptized, 175; to keep Church Communion, 99, 228; under the control of their respective Bishops, 226.
- Columba, St.*, i. 333.
- Columban*, i. 337.
- Commendatory letters*, i. 227.
- Common Prayer Book*, first, and second, ii. 10.
- Commonwealth*, the, ii. 45.
- Condé*, Prince of, ii. 36.
- Confession*, the, of Augsburg, ii. 8; Bishop Bull on, 9.
- the Gallican, ii. 52; the Belgic and Polish, 53.
- Confirmation*, previous to Holy Communion, i. 172.
- an Apostolical institution, ii. 234.
- Congregational Churches* of America, reply of the, i. 124.
- *Union*, the Chairman of the, on Unity, i. 112.
- Congregationalism* not in the Primitive Church, i. 213, ii. 247, 342, 427.
- Congregations* not independent, ii. 210, 245.
- Constantine*, his conversion, i. 244; favours Christians, 245; refers to the Apostolical Canons, 263; calls the Council of Nice, 273; his views of the Church, 281; afterwards favours Arius, 284-290; banishes St. Athanasius, 286.
- Constantinople*, the Council of, guided by the Apostolical Canons, 234.
- Contentions* for the Faith, often fierce, i. 141.
- Constitution*, the, of the Church, settled by the Apostles, i. 216; Apostolical Canons witness to, 221-248.
- Council*, the first, in the Apostles' day, ii. 314.
- the General, of Nice, i. 254; of Constantinople, 294; of Ephesus, 304; of Chalcedon, 309; the fifth, 322, 373; the sixth, 349, 379; the seventh, so-called, 385; all witness to the faith and constitution of the Church, 316-329.
- the, of "Robbers," 308; of Trent, 420-426; the Vatican, 369; the English, at Hereford, 345; at Hatfield, 350.
- Convention*, the, of the American Church, i. 118-124.
- Corinthians*, the, subject to St. Paul, ii. 279-289.
- Cranmer* and Henry VIII., i. 408.
- Creed*, the Nicene, i. 122, 274; the Athanasian, 360.
- Cup*, the Bohemians slaughtered for the, i. 395.
- Cyprian* on discipline, i. 180; on the unity of Bishops, 435.
- Cyril of Alexandria* confutes Nestorius, i. 304; Epistles of, 310.
- Daniel* foretells the founding of Christ's Church, i. 64.
- Deacons*, ministers, ii. 239; the seven, probably not the first, 242; in St. Paul's ministry, 307; Angel James' complaint against lay, 241.
- Decian persecution*, i. 239.
- Defenders* of the ancient faith, i. 292, 328, 330.
- Deposed*, Paul of Samosata, i. 180; St. Chad, 345; Wilfrid, 345.
- Design*, the, of Christ, ii. 88-196; two arguments in support of, 90-102; the parables shadow forth, 104; the teaching and proceedings of Christ manifest, 113; the final arrangements of Christ indicate, 161-174; the Twelve carry out, 197; St. Paul grasps, 297.
- Desire* for unity awakened, i. 81, 128.
- 'Diaconophobia'*, ii. 241.
- Differences*, how they are to be settled, ii. 313-318.
- Hooker on settling, 319.
- Diocesan Episcopacy* established at Jerusalem, ii. 251; to be everywhere, 260; St. Paul also establishes, 321, 331, 342; general extension of, 349, 353, 370; the seven Epistles in the Revelation confirms, 353; noticed by Clement of Rome, 388; by St. Ignatius, 396, 400, 404, 411, 416, 419.
- Dioceses*, size of Scriptural, ii. 353.
- Diocletian persecution*, i. 240.
- Dionysius* of Alexandria, i. 170.
- Disciples* collected by Christ, ii. 119.
- Discipline*, one system of, i. 161; upheld unity, 165-189; Christ's rule on, ii. 156; Hammond on, 158.
- Dissenters* as well as Clergymen feel the evils of division, i. 13, 15.
- Division* of districts and spheres, made by lawful authority, i. 143.
- Divisions*, the evils of, i. 1-35; an argument for unity, 37; avoid, 54; sinful in God's sight, 70; great dissatisfaction with, 81; to be opposed, 133; obstruct discipline, 188; caused by the Papacy; 214, 217; St. Paul's warnings against, ii. 276; the free organization of Christian bodies, bring in, 308; Clement of Rome opposed to, 388.
- Doctrine*, corrupt, forced on the Church by the Papacy, i. 392.

Donatist Schism, i. 301.

Douay, the, College for Jesuits, ii. 29.

Early Christians, the, opposed to all other religions, i. 139, 217; the unity of, 135, 138, 144; their devotion, 146; their changed lives, 147, 152; the testimony of, ii. 379-474.

Easter, the time of keeping, i. 264, ii. 467, 470.

Eastern Bishop, an, asks Dr. Woolf who sent him, ii. 185.

Edict of Nantes, ii. 37.

Edward VI. and his heirs to be at the head of all the Reformed Churches, ii. 57.

Elders, the second order of Ministers, ii. 232; found in the Church at Jerusalem, 232-235; in St. Paul's ministry, 302; not laymen, 303; at first called Bishops, 305; Timothy has, under him, 324-331; Titus also has, 331-337.

Elizabeth, Queen, and the Reformation, i. 414; and the Spanish Armada, ii. 27; succours the Huguenots, 37; learns the deception of some Papist Bishops in preventing the foreign Reformers obtaining Episcopacy, 58.

England, what she suffered from the Papacy, i. 399.

Ensign, the Church to be an, i. 68.

Ephesus, the Council of, restrains the Bishop of Antioch, i. 234; called by Theodosius, the younger, 304; *the Angel* of the Church at, ii. 354; St. Ignatius wrote to, 396.

Episcopacy, historic, necessary for unity, i. 122-125; Gibbon on the early existence of, 220; practically overthrown by the Vatican Council, 428; sought for by the Foreign Reformers, ii. 57.

— *Diocesan*, established by the Apostles, 251; upholds unity in a twofold manner, ii. 292; alike ordained by St. Paul and the Twelve, 293, 321-331; the last testimony of Scripture to, 334; noticed by Clement of Rome, 388; by Ignatius, 396, 400, 404, 411, 416, 419.

Epistles, the, of the New Testament, how they came to be written, i. 77; of St. Paul acknowledged by St. Peter, ii. 310.

Ethiopia converted, i. 335.

Eucharist, the, a means of unity, i. 51; Confirmation previous to, 172; neglect of, condemned, 225; when secretly administered, 242; the confession of Augsburg on, ii. 11; Calvin on, ii. 12; account of, by Justin Martyr, ii. 438.

Eusebius, the historian, on discipline, i. 179; on James being the first Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 253; alludes to the seven Epistles of St. Ignatius, 395; alludes to the second Bishop of Jerusalem, 448.

Eutychian Heresy, i. 307, 310.

Evangelical Alliance, the, i. 85.

Excommunication of Paul of Samosata, i. 180.

Faith, the, Tertullian on, i. 141; the power of, in Primitive Christianity, 157; how kept pure, 209; fierce contentions for, 141, 210.

Fagius, a German Reformer, ii. 9.

Fellowship of the early Christians, i. 163.

First Day of the week, kept, ii. 233.

Foreign Reformers, i. 416; position of, ii. 54.

Forgiveness, a principle of Christ's kingdom, ii. 112.

France, the Reformation in, ii. 4; Louis XI. of, 27.

— *the Church of*, limits the Papal supremacy, 37.

Frankfort, the Council at, reject the seventh General Council, i. 390.

Galerius, i. 240, 243.

Gallican Church, against image worship, i. 389; the confession of the, ii. 52.

Gardiner, Bishop, and Henry VIII., i. 408; the deception of, ii. 59.

Gauls, a great conversion of the, i. 335.

Geneva, the Reformation in, ii. 4; the Bishop of, 21; Hooker on Calvin in, 22; the platform or rule of, 24.

Gentiles, the, united in one body with the Jewish Christians, ii. 308; not to be brought in to the bondage of the Jewish law, 315-318.

Germanus in Britain, i. 299.

Germany, the Reformation in, ii. 4.

Gibbon on Primitive Christianity, i. 154-156; on the early existence of Episcopacy, 220; on Papal cruelty, 377.

Gieseler, wrong about the early Church, ii. 76-82; in error about Bishops and Elders, 76; mistakes a passage in St. Jerome, 77; errs about the meaning of 'Parochia,' 80.

Gospel, the, of St. Paul received by Revelation, ii. 262; of St. Paul the same as that of the Twelve Apostles, 264.

Gospels, how they came to be written, i. 75.

Government, the, of the early Christians essential, i. 163; only one form of Church, 192, 318; of the early Church, not Papal, 211; not Presbyterian, 212; not Congregational, 212; many witnesses to the form of, 222; in the hands of the Bishops, 374, 381; the Confession of Augsburg on Church, ii. 14; the Reformation not to be subversive of the ancient, 45; in the seven Churches of Asia, 346; the testimony of St. Ignatius and others to, 388, 396, 400, 404, 411, 416, 419; shown by the Catalogue of Bishops, 454, 459, 463, 472.

- Growth, the*, of early Christianity, i. 157.
Gregory VII. and Henry IV. of Germany, i. 395.
Grotius, on the angels of the Church, ii. 371.
- Hall, Bishop*, on the twelve thrones, ii. 148.
- Hammond, Dr.*, on the twelve thrones, 149; on discipline, 158; on the institution of the Eucharist, 162.
- Hatch, Dr.*, ii. 428.
- Heath*, the Jesuit, i. 415.
- Hegesippus*, on James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 256; on the succession of Bishops, 446; on Simeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, 447.
- Henry I.* and the Pope, i. 403.
- *II.*, and the independency of the English Church, 403.
- *VIII.* and the Pope, i. 407; the Reformation not by, 408; with Cranmer and Gardiner, 408.
- *IV. of France*, at the head of the Huguenots, ii. 36; turns Papist, and the Edict of Nantes, 37.
- Heresies*, unity of the Church amid, i. 140; condemned by Councils, 141.
- Heresy*, the Macedonian, i. 293; the Pelagian, 298; the Apollinarian, 302; the Eutychian, i. 307; the Monophysite, 322; in the first century, ii. 447.
- Hickes, George*, on the Apostles consecrating a second Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 450.
- Holy Ghost, the*, comes equally alike on the Twelve Apostles, ii. 201.
- Home Re-union Society*, i. 86; asks Convocation to appoint a Committee, 108; in favour of historic Episcopacy, 122, 125.
- Hook, Dean*, on Augustine and Theodore, i. 349.
- Hooker*, on the state of Geneva, ii. 22; on the meaning of the disputed passage in St. Jerome, 79; on the government of the Church by Bishops, 80; on settling differences, ii. 319.
- Huguenots, the*, massacred, i. 395, ii. 32; further designs for exterminating, 36.
- Hume*, on the tyranny of the Papacy in England, i. 400.
- Iconoclasts*, i. 386.
- Ignatius, St.*, account of, ii. 390, 408, 411; the genuine Epistles of, 392; writes to the Ephesians, 396; to the Magnesians, 400; to the Trallians, 404; to the Church at Rome, 408; to Polycarp, 411; to the Church at Smyrna, 416; at Philadelphia, 419; the martyrdom of, 425.
- Images*, the use of, i. 385; the adoration of, objected to, 389.
- Independency* of congregations unknown in the early Church, i. 213, ii. 245.
- *the*, of the Church of England, i. 401-407; of National Churches, ii. 46, 49.
- Independents, the*, at the Commonwealth, ii. 45; have their ministers a lawful call? ii. 187.
- Independent, St. Paul*, of the Twelve Apostles, ii. 262.
- Infallibility, the*, of the Pope, i. 374; rejected by the Catholic Church, 380; forced upon the Vatican Council, 429, 432.
- Infants*, the baptism of, ii. 234.
- Influence* of the early Christians, i. 187, 189.
- Inquisition, the*, in Spain and France, ii. 32; in the Netherlands, 34.
- Institution* of a Christian man, i. 409.
- Interference* with the rule or jurisdiction of another not allowed, i. 143, 209, ii. 247; the Apostles opposed to, 248.
- Iona*, i. 336.
- Ireland* converted by St. Patrick, i. 336.
- Irenæus*, on unity, ii. 443; on the succession of Bishops, 444.
- James, Angel*, his complaint against lay deacons, ii. 241.
- James the Just*, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 253; not one of the Twelve Apostles, 254; Hegesippus and Eusebius respecting, 256; his Episcopacy established by the Apostles, 257.
- Jerome, St.*, Gieseler mistakes, ii. 77.
- Jerusalem*, the Church at, ii. 197; not begun till the coming of the Holy Ghost, 199; a visible body, 206-210; free from divisions, 212, 228; had three orders of ministers, 230-236; James, the first Bishop, 253.
- Jesuits*, i. 368; established by the Papacy, ii. 28; sent to England, 30; immunities, &c., to, lately confirmed by Leo. XIII.,
- Jewel, Bishop*, on the Reformation, i. 413; on the Council of Trent, 422-424.
- John, St.*, his Gospel, i. 76; his book of Revelation, 77, ii. 345; against divisions, ii. 95; his position among the seven Churches, 273.
- Judas*, election in the place of, ii. 200.
- Jurisdiction*, all Bishops to keep to their own, i. 265.
- Justin Martyr*, on Christian life, i. 153; on baptism, and the Eucharist, ii. 436; on public worship on Sunday, 440.
- Kettler, Bishop*, against Papal infallibility, i. 430, 432.

- Kingdom, the*, of heaven, is the Church of Christ, ii. 102; illustrated by many parables, 102-109; preparations for setting up, 114-139.
- Knox, John*, against the Bishops subject to the Pope, ii. 62; consents to have Bishops reformed, 63-65; did not originate the present system of Presbyterianism, 65.
- Laity, the*, able to judge what is right, ii. 87.
- Lambeth Conference*, contrasted with the Vatican Council, i. 433; should plead for the independency of National Churches, 436; should seek for the unity of Christ's Kingdom, 437.
- Leo*, Bishop of Rome, i. 309; claims the authority of St. Peter, 314.
- *XIII.*, lately confirmed the immunities of the Jesuits, ii. 43.
- Leslie, Bishop*, ii. 39.
- Leto Pomponio*, on the Vatican Council, i. 430.
- Letters*, commendatory, i. 227.
- Liberality* of the Early English Church, i. 356.
- Lightfoot, Bishop*, Apostolic Fathers, ii. 390; on St. Ignatius's Epistles, 394.
- Louis XIV.* of France and the Papal confederacy, ii. 38.
- Love*, a principle in Christ's Kingdom, ii. 110.
- Luke, St.*, his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, i. 76.
- Lupus* opposes the Pelagians in Britain, i. 229.
- Luther* and the Confession of Augsburg, ii. 8; at Smalcald, 51; his desire for Episcopacy, 60.
- Macedonian, the*, heresy, i. 293.
- Macknight, Dr.*, on the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, ii. 325.
- Magnesians*, St. Ignatius writes to the, ii. 400.
- Mahometanism* absorbs many heretics, i. 333.
- Maré, Bishop*, against infallibility, i. 431.
- Martian*, the Emperor, called the Council of Chalcedon, i. 309; supports the cause of unity, 311.
- Martin, St.*, i. 335.
- Martyrs* of the Primitive Church, i. 135, 146.
- Martyr, Peter*, ii. 9.
- Mary, Queen*, and the Reformation, i. 414.
- Melancthon*, on divisions, i. 6; and the Confession of Augsburg, ii. 8; on the unity of the Church, 15; his desire for Episcopacy, 60.
- Melvilles, the*, introduced the present kind of Presbyterianism into Scotland, ii. 65.
- Meyrick*, on the Lambeth Conference, i. 435.
- Ministers*, a threefold order of, i. 226; in the Jewish Church, ii. 131; in Christ's ministry, 133; Divinely appointed, 135; all must be lawfully sent, 182; Olshausen, on having an outward call to be, 184; of different ranks in the Church at Jerusalem, 237, 258; the second and third orders of, subservient to the first, 245, 258; a threefold order of, adopted by St. Paul, 307; constantly mentioned in the Apostolical Canons, i. 225; by St. Ignatius, and other early writers, ii. 387, 398, 400, 405, 417, 420, 423, 434.
- Missionary* ancient, efforts, i. 335.
- Mission Work* of the Early English Church, i. 355.
- Moderators* differ from Bishops, ii. 36.
- Monophysite, the*, heresy, i. 322.
- Monsell*, Hymn on unity, i. 144; on Christian life, 151.
- Mosheim*, on Constantine's Christianity, i. 245; wrong about the early Church, ii. 14; corrected by Dr. Maclaine, 76; his theory cannot stand, ii. 428.
- Music*, Early English Church, i. 356.
- Nantes*, Edict of, ii. 37.
- Narcissus*, the 30th Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 455; re-elected, 457.
- National Churches* independent, ii. 46, 49.
- 'Necessary the, Erudition,'* i. 409.
- Nemesius*, in perverting the Scriptural order, ii. 241.
- Nestorius* summoned by the Bishops, i. 234.
- Netherlands*, the Reformation in the, ii. 4; the Inquisition in the, 34; the struggle for freedom in the, 35.
- Nicene Creed*, a sufficient statement, i. 122.
- *Council*, guided by Apostolical Canons, 233; called by Constantine, 254; for the preservation of unity, 261; an account of the, 262-276; against the enforced celibacy of the Clergy, 271; confirmed by the next three General Councils, 291.
- Nonconformists*, their desire for unity, i. 81; their piety acknowledged, 89, ii. 376; they long for larger unity, 116; Nonconformity hinders unity, ii. 43.
- Obedience*, a principle in Christ's Kingdom, ii. 111; necessary to unity, 273; of the Corinthians to St. Paul, 282; to lawful ministers, 289.
- Offences*, Christ on, 156.
- Offenders*, subject to discipline, i. 177.
- Olshausen*, on all life and authority from Christ, ii. 143; on a lawful call to the ministry, 184.

- One body in Christ*, the basis of unity, i. 48; all Christians must be of, ii. 267; the existence of, 272.
- One faith and one rule* among the Primitive Christians, i. 56, 57, 141; St. Paul is of the, ii. 365.
- One form* of Church government, i. 191.
- One system* of discipline, i. 161.
- Orange*, the Prince of, ii. 34, 36.
- Organization*, the free, of Christians condemned, ii. 270, 272, 475.
- Origen*, on discipline, i. 178.
- Papacy*, *no*, in the Primitive Church, i. 211; the corruptions of the, a cause of divisions, 214; unknown to the Nicene Fathers, 279; the early Church independent of the, 390; the tyranny of the, 366, 399, ii. 26, 38; dangerous to the Faith and rule of the Church, i. 374, 392; Gregory the Great on the, 375; destructive of Christian unity, 377; the Catholic Church opposed the beginning of the, 378; Bohemians slaughtered by the, 395; subtle dealings of the, ii. 26; establishes the Jesuits, 28; the shameful means by which it triumphs, 41; undermines the independency of National Churches, 46; prevents the Foreign Reformers obtaining Episcopacy, 57; shows a want of faith in Christ, 225.
- Papal authority and infallibility*, i. 374; cruelty, i. 377, 395, ii. 32-36; confederacy of princes, ii. 38.
- Paphnutius*, i. 271; respect paid to, by Constantine, 275.
- Parables*, i. 158, ii. 204, 5, 6, 7.
- 'Parochia'*, Gieseler's error about, ii. 80.
- Parochial system*, the, i. 355.
- Parsons*, the Jesuit, in England, ii. 30.
- Patriarchal rule*, i. 379.
- Patrick, St.*, i. 336.
- Paul*, of Samosata, i. 180.
- Paul, St.*, the Epistles of, i. 77; careful not to interfere in the territory of another, ii. 249; his testimony to St. James the Just being Bishop of Jerusalem, 253; his testimony to the unity of Christians, 261; his independency of the Twelve, 262; still an Apostle by Divine authority, 262; his Gospel received by Revelation, the same as that of the Twelve, 263, 4; acknowledged by the Twelve, 265; and his converts added to the same body, 265, 6; enforces the principle of unity, 276; warns against divisions, 276; his exercise of discipline, and his authority asserted, 278-289; the expounder of the unity of the Church, 291; upholds unity in a twofold way, 292; his Episcopacy like that of the Twelve, which it explains, 293; if any one might have started another body, *Paul, St.*—continued.
296; grasped the design of Christ, 297; the teaching and rule of, the same as that of the Twelve, 298; labours for the unity of the one body, 301; the three-fold order of ministers adopted by, 307; able to deal with subtle questions, 309; the Epistles of, acknowledged by St. Peter, 310; the latter approves, 312; transmits his Episcopal authority to others, 321-342; knew nothing of the Papal, Presbyterian, or Congregational systems, 341.
- Pearson, Bishop*, on the Apostolical Canons, i. 225; on the Apostles remaining twelve years at Jerusalem, ii. 216.
- Pelagian, the*, heresy, i. 298.
- Penance* not a meritorious act, i. 181; the Emperor Theodosius doing, 181.
- Persecution*, unity amid, i. 136, 138; conduct of Christians under, 145; of Primitive Christians, 138-145; related by Justin Martyr, and by Tertullian, 153; by Gibbon, 154-156; the period of, 159.
- Peter, St.*, not in a higher rank to the other Apostles, ii. 150-155, 173, 218; one with the other Apostles, 203-216; acknowledges St. Paul's Epistles, 310; of one mind with St. Paul, 312.
- Philadelphians*, Ignatius writes to the, ii. 419.
- Philip*, the Deacon, 239.
- Philip of Spain* and the Inquisition, ii. 33, 34.
- Polish, the*, Confession, ii. 53.
- Polycarp*, St. Ignatius writes to, ii. 411; his testimony to Christian unity, 433; his visit to Anicetus, 467.
- Polycrates*, ii. 445.
- Pope, the*, favours idolatry, i. 385-391; commemorates the massacre of the Huguenots, 395; his conduct towards Elizabeth, 395; and the Armada for the subjugation of England, 396; and William the Conqueror, 401; and William Rufus about the independency of the English Church, 402; and Henry I. 403; and King John, 404; his Infallibility forced on the Vatican Council, 428-432; and Henry VIII., 407-410, ii. 27.
- Presbyterianism, no*, in the Primitive Church, i. 212; nor at the Council of Nice, 276; at the Savoy Conference, ii. 9; of Scotland, 65.
- Presbytery*, Dr. Macknight on the, ii. 335; St. Paul and others, the, 338.
- Principles, the*, of the English Church, i. 90; the evil of ignoring, 95.
- Printing* favourable to the Reformation, ii. 4.
- Private judgment*, often opposed to Scripture, i. 40, 60; men trusting to, hinder unity, i. 62, ii. 70.

- Probation* for baptism, i. 166-170.
- Protestants* drove out the Monks, ii. 28; the true, aimed at the unity of Christ's Church, 67-70.
- Puritans, the*, and the Commonwealth, ii. 45.
- Quirinus*, letters of, on the Vatican Council, i. 433.
- Ranke* on the German Reformation, ii. 7.
- Ratisbon*, meeting for unity at, ii. 52.
- Reformation, the*, Bishop of Winchester on, i. 100; the crisis of, 367; what England had to endure before, 399; of the Church of England not by Henry VIII., 408; in England effected from within the Church in Edward VI.'s reign, 410; the principle of, 410-413, ii. 44; under Mary and Elizabeth, i. 414; on the Continent, i. 416, ii. 3; in Germany, Geneva, Spain, France, and the Netherlands, ii. 4; not to cause schism, ii. 6; how the Papacy gained an advantage over, 26; and the Jesuits, 28; the want of Episcopacy abroad hinders, 56.
- Reformers, the Foreign*, the first design of, ii. 8, 46, 51; the successors of, adopt a false principle, 45; the difficulties of, 50, 55; refused a hearing at the Council of Trent, 50; the meeting of, at Smalcald, 51; not guilty of schism, 53; the position of, 55; their desire for Episcopacy, 57; want to make Edward VI. and his heirs the head of all the Reformed Churches, 57.
- Reply* from Congregational Churches in America, i. 124.
- Restoration* of Penitents, i. 180.
- Restraining* influence of discipline, i. 185.
- Reunion* of Christians, a Committee for the, i. 108.
- Revelation, the*, of St. John, testifies to Episcopacy, ii. 345.
- Revenues* of the Early English Church, i. 354, 356.
- Robbers*, a Council called the Assembly of, i. 308.
- Rome*, a College for Jesuits at, ii. 29.
- *the Bishop of*, dislikes the Bishop of Constantinople being his equal in rank, i. 312; not infallible, 380; in several cases condemned, 381; not accounted the head of the Church, 381; appeals to, not anciently allowed, 382; tries to force corrupt doctrines upon the Church, 392; the instigator of schism, and the cause of much misery and bloodshed, 396.
- *the Church of*, had never any just right to the English revenues or Churches, i. 357; ceased to be Catholic, 371; the separation of, ii. 3; and the
- Rome, the Church of*—continued.
- Bible, ii. 4; the corruptions of, ii. 4; St. Ignatius writes to, 408.
- Romish, the*, schism in England, i. 414.
- Rule, one*, in all the Church, i. 141; the highest authorities subject to, 142.
- Sacrament, the*, of Christ's Body and Blood, a bond of unity, i. 51; confirmation the Church's admission to, 172; neglect of, condemned, 225; when secretly administered, 242; Augsburg confession on, ii. 11; Calvin on, 12; the institution of, 61; the first delegation to the Apostles is to perpetuate, 162; Bishop Jer. Taylor on 'Do this,' in, 162; Hammond on 'Do this,' in, 162.
- Sacraments, the two*, to be accepted by all Christians wishing for unity, i. 122.
- Sardican Canons*, i. 314.
- Savoy*, the Conference at, and the Augsburg Confession, ii. 9.
- Schism*, the Donatist, i. 301; not designed by the first Reformers, ii. 6.
- Schisms*, unity amid, i. 40; instigated by the followers of the Pope, and Foreign Reformers, i. 416; the first Reformers not guilty of, ii. 53.
- Scipio* and Bishop Jewel, i. 422.
- Scotland, James of*, ii. 27; J. Knox in, 62, 64; the Presbyterianism of, 65, 67.
- Scriptures, the*, the standard for all Christians, i. 38; must be taken in the sense they were written, 41; testify to the Divine origin of the Church, 72; the Church begun before the New Testament, 73; constantly refer to the unity of Christians in one body, 78; the revealed will of God, 122; exemplified in the life of the early Christians, 149-152; ignorance of, hinders unity, ii. 72; the final testimony of, to Episcopacy, 344; spurious books rejected from, 461.
- Second Century Christianity*, ii. 379, 430.
- Selborne, Lord*, on the Parochial system, i. 354; on the independency of the English Church, 406.
- Self-denial and Self-sacrifice*, principles of Christ's Kingdom, ii. 112.
- Service*, a principle in Christ's Kingdom, ii. 112.
- Seven, the*, Churches of Asia Minor, ii. 346; contrasted with seven Dioceses in the South of England, 352.
- Seventy, the*, disciples ordained, ii. 128; in the Jewish Sanhedrim, 130; the silence afterwards about, 137.
- Sidonius*, Michael, ii. 15.
- Simeon*, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 447.
- Sinners'* welfare, discipline needed for, i. 184.

Smalcald, meeting of Foreign Reformers at, ii. 51.

Smyrna, St. Ignatius writes to the Church of, ii. 416.

'*Snake in the Grass*,' ii. 61.

Sovereignty of Christ, ii. 360.

Spain, the Reformation in, ii. 4; Ferdinand and Isabella of, 27; the horrors of the Inquisition in, 32.

Stroschmayer, Bishop, insulted in the Vatican Council, i. 430.

Strype, on the fraud of Bishops Gardiner and Bonner, ii. 58.

State Church, is true unity compatible with the a? asked, i. 115.

Stephen, St., ii. 238.

Stubbs, Bishop, on Augustine's Mission, i. 338; on the Early English Church, 343.

Succession, a, of Ministers, established by Christ, i. 175, 189; a means of unity, ii. 176.

— *the, of Bishops* (Irenæus), ii. 444; (Hegesippus), 446; (G. Hickes), 451; traced up to the Apostles, 453, 455, 460, 464; kept up by the neighbouring Bishops, 416, 424, 456.

Sunday, the Christian's Day of Rest, ii. 232, 441.

Supremacy, not given to S. Peter, ii. 150-155, 172, 314; not given to Rome by the first five General Councils, i. 373; of the Pope limited by the Gallican Church, ii. 37.

Sussex, the Pagans of, i. 352-354.

Swithbert, i. 358.

Synod of Australia, i. 126; of South Africa, 127; of Bishops of Bishops to be regularly held, 227.

Tasmania, the Bishop of, i. 127.

Taylor, Bishop Jer., on 'Do this,' ii. 162; on Church Government binding upon all, 475.

Tercentenaries, six, of the Church, i. 364-370.

Tertullian on the Faith, i. 141; on early Christian life, 153; on the growth of Christianity, 157; on discipline, 178.

Theodore, Archbishop, unites the two succession of Bishops in England, i. 343-349; deposes St. Chad, 344; deposes Wilfrid, 345; restores St. Chad with honour, 351; his labours, 355; would not allow appeals to Rome, 382.

Theodosius, the Emperor doing penance, i. 181; calls the General Council of Constantinople, 294; taught to honour Christ, like to the Father, 296.

Theotokos, the dispute on, i. 303.

Three-fold order of Ministers, i. 226; in the Jewish Church, ii. 131; in Christ's ministry, 133; in the Church of the

Threefold Order—continued.

Apostles, 244; in St. Paul's ministry, 307; alluded to by Clement of Rome, 387; the testimony of St. Ignatius to a, 398, 400, 405, 415, 423.

Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, ii. 323-331.

Titus, Bishop of Crete, ii. 331-334; his authority, 339.

Trallians, St. Ignatius writes to the, ii. 404.

Trent, the Council of, i. 367, 420-426; several Churches not represented at, 422; Spain and France expostulate against the proceedings, at 424; the Reformers refused a hearing at, ii. 50.

Twelve Thrones, on the, by Bishop Hall, ii. 148; by Dr. Hammond, 149.

Union with Christ, kept the Church as one body, ii. 83; spiritual fellowship desired with all in, i. 92.

Unity, reasons for, i. 36; a basis of, to be sought for, 37; obedience to Christ the secret of, 44; the means of, ordained by Christ, 45; made known in Scripture, 47; one Body or Society as the basis of, 48; rules for maintaining, 49; upheld by receiving the Eucharist, and worshipping together, 51; more than good will or coming together, 52, 53; allows of differences in many points, 54; agreement in essentials necessary for, 56; in one body, the Church, 56; in one faith, 56; in one kind of government in the Church, 57; in having the same constitution, 57; a basis of, laid down by Christ and His Apostles, 72; awakened desire for, 81; great difference in the idea of, 82; Association for the, of Christendom, 84; utterances by those in the Church of England on, 87; Dissent ignoring Church, 96; the Church responsible to Christ for its, 107; Chairman of Congregational Union on, 112, 113; is, compatible with a State Church? asked, 115; American Church Convention (1886) on, 128-124; four requirements for, 120, 121; exemplified in the Primitive Church, 121; four inherent particulars essential to, 122; a desire for, from many quarters, 128; not to precipitate new terms of, 129; learning from Christ and His Apostles the nature of, 130; among the Primitive Christians, 133, 135; possible though a diversity of minds, 134. American Church on, 113-124; American Congregationalists on, 124; New York Presbyterians on, 125; Australian Synod on, 126; South African Synod on, 127; amid persecutions, 136, 138; of Christians in Apostolic days, 136; secured by appeals to Synods, 142; Hymn on, 144; upheld by discipline,

Unity.—continued.

165; narrow views of, 192; one form of government essential to, 193; in worldly matters, 195; of a nation, 195; loyalty to Christ should insure, 197, 205; in the Army or Navy, 199; in railway management, 201; the great worth of, 203; among the Bishops, 231; secured by Apostolical Canons, 232; under altered conditions, 249-282; the struggle for, 283-321; the first four General Councils called to secure 316-325; general acceptance of the basis of, 326-363; of the Early English Church, 343; fruits of, in the Early English Church, 354-360; departure from the basis of, 364-397; the Athanasian Creed a symbol of, 369; the Papacy destructive of, 377; long held to, amid the corruptions and tyranny of the Papacy, 398; with freedom in the Lambeth Conference, 433; Cyprian on the, of Bishops, 437; of Christ's Kingdom to be furthered by the Conference, 437; desired by Foreign Reformers, ii. 15; what still hinders a return to, 42-87; the Papacy hinders, 42; Nonconformity hinders, 43; the Reformation not subversive of, 45; sought for by the Reformers at the Diet of Augsburg, 46, 47; sought for at Ratisbon, 51; true Protestants in favour of, 67, 68; men trusting to their private judgment, hinder, 70; ambitious and envious men hinder, 71; men ignorant of Scripture teaching hinder, 72; hindered by wrong impressions, 73-86; in the design of Christ, 88; revealed in His parables, 106, 108; as a principle of Christ's kingdom, 110; to be preserved by a regularly ordained succession of ministers, 176; in the Church at Jerusalem, 210-213; through the Episcopacy, 246; of the Primitive Christians a glorious sight, 247; of Christians enforced by St. Paul, 262, 272; endeavouring to keep the, 269-274; obedience necessary to, 273, 274; the exercise of discipline needful for, 278, 286; St. Paul the great advocate for, 291; upheld in a twofold manner, 292; the Acts and Epistles show the existence of, 299; St. Paul strives for, 301; between Jews and Gentiles, 308; the early Christians testify to, 379; Clement of Rome on, 383; Ignatius on, 398, 399, 402, 404, 413, 421, 423; Irenæus on, 443; summing up the subject of, 472, 476.

Utrecht, the Church of, i. 358.

Vatican, the Council, i. 369, 427; practically overthrows the Episcopacy, 428; the infallibility of the Pope, forced upon, 429; other proceedings of, 430.

Victor of Rome, and Irenæus, ii. 470.

Vigilius, Bishop of Rome, condemned, and retracts, i. 323, 373.

Visibility, the, of the Church, ii. 206; Bishop Butler on, 209.

Waddington, Dean, in error about the early Church, ii. 82-85.

Waldenses, ii. 39.

Wesley and the Church, ii. 51.

Wesleyans, have their ministers a lawful call? ii. 187.

Westminster Confession, i. 125.

Whitsunday, the baptized appear in white on, i. 172.

Wilberforce, Canon, and the Bishop of Winchester, i. 88; desires the spiritual union of all, 92; his fidelity to the Church, 93.

Wilbrord, i. 358.

Wilfrid, i. 344, 352.

William the Conqueror, and the Pope, i. 401.

Winchester, Bishop of, and Canon Wilberforce, i. 88; acknowledges the piety of Nonconformists, 89; on the principles of the Church, 90; on the danger of ignoring Church principles, 91, 95; on dissent ignoring the unity of Christ's body, 96; on the Reformation, 100; on the desire for unity, 100.

Winfrid, i. 359.

Woolf, Dr., anecdote, on 'who sent,' ii. 185.

Wordsworth, Bishop, on the size of Dioceses, ii. 353; on the angels of the Churches, 367.

Worship, unity manifested in public, i. 16; a means of unity, 52; among the primitive Christians, ii. 440.

Young Men's Christian Association, i. 87.

Zuinglius, ii. 13.

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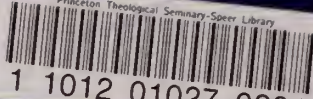
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